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Terrorist Activity

Russia: Chechen Rebels Create Stronghold in Novogroznenskiy

LD1702212496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2008 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Feb 17 (INTERFAX) — About 300 Chechen separatists from the republic's Vedeno, Nozhay-Yurt and Gudermes regions have gathered in the Novogroznenskiy village in eastern Chechnya and created a stronghold there, the Russian interior troops press bureau told INTERFAX Saturday.

The Chechen separatist rebels have dug numerous trenches across the village, the same source said.

Russian Interior Ministry servicemen tried to enter the village on Saturday afternoon but were fired on from automatic weapons. Russian servicemen had to fire back, the same source said.

Fighting continued until darkness fell, the same source said. Four Chechen policemen and interior troopers were wounded, the same source said.

Talks between the Novogroznenskiy administration, the Gudermes regional administration and representatives of the Moscow-backed Chechen government and the Russian interior troops command reached a deadlock Saturday. A representative of the Russian interior troops press bureau blamed this on "the non-constructive stand taken by the administration of the Novogroznenskiy village."

Earlier on Saturday, the Chechen police and Russian Interior Ministry officers launched an operation to check passports of Chechen residents and seize their weapons. Units of the Chechen interim forces were called to take part in the operation, the same source said.

Residents of Chechnya's Suvorov-Yurt and Verkhniy Suvorov-Yurt populated areas voluntarily handed in their fire-arms, the same source said.

Russia: Chechen Rebels Drive Humanitarian Convoy Into Mountains

LD1802115096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1110 GMT 18 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Sergey Bazhenov and Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, February 18 (ITAR-TASS) — A convoy of 18 trucks with humanitarian aid from the Chechen Emergencies Ministry for residents of the Achkhoi-Martan district was seized by Chechen rebels, ITAR-TASS learned from the press centre of the Chechen government here on Sunday.

Trucks were loaded with flour, cereals, vegetable oil, margarine, salt and baby food. The convoy was attacked on Saturday several kilometers from the district centre.

Some 50 rebels, at first, stopped the convoy with dense fire from machine guns and grenade launchers, then captured it and drove in the direction of the mountainous village of Alkhozur controlled by gunmen.

According to preliminary data, the humanitarian aid was accompanied by 36 people, including drivers. Their fate is unknown. The Chechen Government has no information about casualties for the time being.

It is indicative that the convoy was seized on the same highway where rebels robbered, last Friday, a cash collector's car which carried one billion roubles to pay children's allowances and pensions in the Achkhoi-Martan district.

Russia: Federal Troops 'Drawn Right Up' to Novogroznenskiy

LD1702204996 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 17 Feb 96

[From the "Segodnya" program by announcer resenter Mikhail Osokin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Now for another report directly from Chechnya, about the situation around the settlement of Novogroznenskiy. To judge from the latest information, troops have drawn right up to the settlement from at least two directions. This is what it looks like, given the report that the inhabitants of the neighboring settlements of Suvorov-Yurt and Verkhniy Suvorov-Yurt voluntarily surrendered the firearms in their possession.

The situation around Novogroznenskiy remains tense. To recap: it was here during the fighting last night that five servicemen died and six were wounded when Dudayev's fighters used mortars to shell a guard post. Two armored vehicles were put out of action.

Russia: No Radio Contact Made With Ambushed Aid Convoy

LD1702173596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1650 GMT 17 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Sergey Bazhenov and Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 17 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — The Chechen Interior Ministry's attempts to establish radio communication with the Emergencies Ministry's convoy, which was attacked by Dudayev's gunmen at 1740 Moscow time today, have proved unsuccessful.

The convoy was ambushed, an ITAR-TASS correspondent learned at the Chechen Interior Ministry. The last radio communication with the Interior Ministry duty office was held at 1740. Emergencies Ministry officers who accompanied the humanitarian aid (flour, baby food) managed to say that the convoy had come under fire from grenade-launchers and sub-machine-guns. According to the Chechen Interior Ministry, at 1900 nothing is known about the convoy.

The convoy belonged to the Emergencies Ministry of the Chechen Republic. It was to be delivered to the people of remote mountain villages of the Achkhoy-Martan District.

Russia: Chechen Aid Convoy Vehicles Manage To Escape

LD1802154396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1502 GMT 18 Feb 96

[By correspondents Sergey Bazhenov and Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 18 February (ITAR-TASS) — Nine of the 28 vehicles of the convoy belonging to the Chechen ministry for emergencies, carrying humanitarian aid and seized by Dudayev's militants on Saturday [17 February] managed to escape and today arrived in Achkhoy-Martan, district capital some 40 kilometers west of Groznyy, Sultan Abdulkhalimov, Chechen minister of economy, told an ITAR-TASS correspondent today.

The minister said the remaining vehicles continued to be held by the militants.

According to the latest data, the convoy consisted of 28 vehicles and not 18, as reported earlier. They were carrying flour, groats, oil, and salt for the inaccessible mountain villages in Achkhoy-Martan District.

Russia: Casualties Among Federal Troops, Dudayev Men Reported

LD2002125696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1237 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, February 20 (ITAR-TASS) — By eleven a.m. on Tuesday Dudayev men in Novogroznenskiy lost some 170 people. General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, commander of the joint group of federal forces in Chechnya, said this at a news conference here. He said some 30 soldiers of the federal forces were killed. The command believes the operation in Novogroznenskiy will be completed today or tomorrow.

The federal forces persist in attempts to establish a dialogue with Dudayev's supporters and persuade them to lay down arms, Tikhomirov said. These attempts have not yet been successful.

A number of villages situated south of Novogroznenskiy come under fire, ITAR-TASS learned from the press service of the head of the Chechen Republic. According to the information received by the administration of the republic's leadership, there are no federal forces in the district. Dudayev men possibly attempt to provoke the further aggravation of the situation.

Russia: General Blames Local Heads for Novogroznenskiy Attack

LD1802200096 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 18 Feb 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As said to journalists by General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, the commander of the Joint Grouping of the Chechen Federal Forces, the local authorities must take part of the blame for what has happened in Novogroznenskiy. Under the protocol on peace and accord, they should have informed the federal troops about the arrival of the rebels in the village.

As for the humanitarian convoy seized on yesterday, the general said he was bewildered by the fact that the convoy was sent down the roads diverting the checkpoints of the federal troops without escort. He said this was a well-staged performance. [passage omitted]

Russia: Novogroznenskiy Seen Becoming Another Pervomayskoye

LD1702175096 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 17 Feb 96

[From the "Segodnya" program by announcer Mikhail Osokin]

[FBIS Translated Text] The deadline for the Chechens in Novogroznenskiy to hand in their weapons expired this morning. The military have announced that this has not been done, and that the agreements reached have been broken. They also say that Dudayev fighters are still in the settlement and that trenches have been dug and sheltered positions equipped. This is all very reminiscent of the vocabulaty used just before the assault on the village of Pervomayskoye, where Salman Raduyev's unit had dug itself in.

[Correspondent, over video of federal troops in action, clip of Aslan Maskhadov] The settlement of Novogroznenskiy, in eastern Chechnya, seems likely to become the center of media attention again. It was here that talks on freeing hostages were held at the end of January. Observers believe Dudayev's formations have a headquarters here. The federal troops started to tighten a ring around Novogroznenskiy at the beginning of February, when Russian soldiers combed nearby villages. A conflict was bound to flare up, and today reports came in of Russian Army positions being shelled overnight from Friday to Saturday.

Information on casualties is contradictory: in an interview to the Russian news agency, RIA, internal troop commander Anatoliy Shkirko mentioned the following figures: five dead and six wounded. He announced that the enemy's weapon positions had been neutralized, and said Novogroznenskiy was fully blockaded.

The other side is also preparing for open warfare. The POSTFAKTUM agency reported that Aslan Maskhadov, chief of staff of Dudayev's armed formations, has issued an order for all of the militants' units to maintain constant combat readiness.

There are other coincidences that put one on one's guard, too. Yesterday, the head of the Novogroznenskiy administration promised that all conditions of the peace and accord protocol that was signed earlier would be met. Now, however, the Russian military has announced that the protocol has been violated unilaterally by the Chechen side.

Russia: Dudayev Forces Taking Chechen Opposition Members Hostage

LD1802163796 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] NTV Television correspondent Yelena Masyuk reports from Chechnya, where the number of hostages is growing, but the precise number cannot be established. After interviewing two Russian servicemen being held in an unspecified location, Masyuk adds:

[Begin Masyuk recording] In recent months the Dudayev forces have started taking people from the Chechen opposition hostage, too. The place where they are being held is usually kept secret. Field commanders conceal from one another which oppositionist they have managed to take captive, mainly because of the teip [clan] relations in the republic and moral obligations towards one another. For example, the brother of former chairman of the National Rebirth government, Salambek Khadzhiyev, is being interrogated blindfold, and the Dudayev fighters wear black masks during the interrogation. Izmail Khadzhiyev therefore does not know exactly who is holding him captive. [end recording]

Russia: Maskhadov Orders Troops To Intensify Activities

LD1702173196 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1314 GMT 17 Feb 96

[From the "Panorama" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received a report from Pavel Guskov, our correspondent for the North Caucasus:

[Begin Guskov recording] In the past 24 hours the situation in the North Caucasus, above all in the areas of Chechnya and the areas of Stavropol Territory and North Ossetia adjacent to it, has become complicated.

The competent bodies have received a report confirming this to the effect that Aslan Maskhadov, the chief of staff of Dudayev's formations, has given instructions for the combat groups under him to step up their activities throughout Chechnya and along the perimeter of its administrative border with its neighbors. It is on this basis that enhanced security measures have been taken. Defense Ministry troop units and Interior Ministry and state security units have been put on extra alert. In connection with this, reports on the situation in this region have been coming in continually. So far there have been no incidents providing grounds for the claim that Dudayev's formations could break through somewhere to other regions.

But 24 hours ago a tragedy occurred in the large Cossack village of Stoderevskaya. Four bandits — they are already known and it is clear that they have nothing to do with any of the representatives of the Caucasian peoples — fired at a group of militia workers who were attempting to search a house where these individuals had made themselves comfortable, and then disappeared. This group, which is now being pursued, is rushing to and fro in the vicinity of Stoderevskaya. Some of the mass media reported today that this was allegedly something to do with the Cossacks. The competent bodies have flatly rejected the report that the criminals have anything to do with the Stavropol Cossacks. It is known that they are new arrivals and not native residents.

Mayak, the North Caucasus, Pavel Guskov. [end recording]

[Announcer] But as far as Chechnya is concerned, the Russian Internal Affairs Ministry is expecting the militants to step up their activities both in the republic itself and beyond its borders, something Russian Interior Minister Anatoliy Kulikov said yesterday:

[Begin Kulikov recording] Dudayev today is ready to make sacrifices. Sensing that he is doomed as a politician, he is ready to embark on any actions simply to blow things up.

Realizing the seriousness of all this and that Dudayev has very great influence with other criminals beyond the borders of Chechnya, including individuals hailing from the Chechen Republic, we have been taking very serious and energetic measures right up to the point where at the end of December, by mutual agreement with all the CIS interior ministers, we conducted the Vikhr [Whirlwind] operation, and today I can already provide you with some figures: In December, 117 highly dangerous criminal groups hailing from or having links with the Chechen Republic, with the Dudayev regime, were rendered harmless — 2,500 individuals were brought to book and 8,782 crimes were cleared up. [end recording]

[Announcer] This information was provided by Russia's interior minister.

Analysts of the ARGUMENTY I FAKTY Information Center believe that the withdrawal of the Russian federal troops from the armed conflict zone will not be advantageous to either Zavgayev or Dudayev. In accordance with the unwritten law of blood vengeance that operates in the Caucasus, an exacerbation of enmity between Chechen clans could occur after Russian troops have been withdrawn. Among these clans there are many who have suffered from Dudayev's militants. After all Chechens are taught to handle weapons from childhood and they do not rest as long as they have not avenged their relatives. For this reason, protracting the conflict is advantageous to both sides, and in particular to Dudayev himself. Otherwise he will have to fight his own people. This is the view of the analysts of the ARGUMENTY I FAKTY — NOVOSTI news agency.

Russia: Chechnya's Former Mufti Kidnapped in Groznyy

LD2002125396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1200 GMT 20 Feb 96

[By unidentified ITAR-TASS correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 20 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Shakhid Khadzhi Gazabayev, a religious figure, has joined the two Orthodox priests, kidnapped in Chechnya.

Doku Zavgayev, the head of the republic, told a news conference today that Chechnya's former mufti, currently a respected religious authority, was spirited out from the center of Groznyy by unidentified persons on 18 February.

The law and order bodies are searching for the cleric.

Military Activity

Russia: Federal Commander Discusses Situation in Chechnya

MM1602185796 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 16 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[Interview with Lieutenant General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, Commander of the Joint Grouping of Federal Forces in the Chechen Republic, by Konstantin Petrov; place and date not given: "Forces in Chechnya Guarantors of Peace and Order. That Is the Opinion of Lieutenant General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, Commander of the Joint Grouping of Federal Forces in the Chechen Republic"]

[FBIS Translated Text] From KRASNAYA ZVEZDA files:

Vyacheslav Valentinovich Tikhomirov was born in 1945 in Tambov Oblast. He graduated Tashkent Higher Combined Arms Command School, the M.V. Frunze Military Academy, and the General Staff Academy. He has been chief of staff and first deputy commander of the 14th Army. From May 1995 he was deputy commander of the North Caucasus Military District forces with responsibility for combat training. In accordance with a Russian Federation presidential edict he has since 1996 been commander of the Joint Grouping of Federal Forces in Chechnya.

[Petrov] Comrade Lieutenant General, you have headed the Joint Grouping of Federal Forces for almost two months now. How would you describe the current situation taking into consideration the latest events in Chechnya?

[Tikhomirov] The situation is radically different from that of 1995. At that time the federal forces were confronted by illegally organized armed formations. With a single headquarters, leadership, and command structure. Today these do not exist. There are just bands living according to rules they have established themselves. They control precisely the territories with vitally important interests for them, preventing "outsiders" from entering them. The bandits operate according to the single principle of stealing and buying up weapons to reaffirm their message of who is boss in the region.

The whole world, in my opinion, understands what a threat the situation in Chechnya is to Russia today. Chechnya has become a center of international banditry and terrorism. The tragedy in Budennovsk and the events in Dagestan are graphic evidence of this.

[Petrov] How, incidentally, do you assess the conduct of the operation in Pervomayskoye?

[Tikhomirov] Let me put it like this. Maybe, of course, the operation was not as successful as we would have liked. It was, of course, calculated that none of the bandits would get out of the settlement. But the fact remains that Raduyev's units managed to get away at night, having concentrated all their forces in a single narrow area. By literally using the corpses of other bandits as a road. Weapons and people can only do so much. On this occasion they proved to have some limitations.

However, there is another side to the events in Pervomayskoye. The bandits finally got what they deserved and did not escape just punishment. Hundreds of thousands of people have had their eyes opened to where the gunmen's actions are leading. And where they may lead if they are not halted. It is no longer enough for them to shoot and spill the blood of civilians. They are trying to draw others into the war and to kindle armed conflict all over the Caucasus. Today the Chechen people have a real chance of sorting everything out properly, of making the right choice without giving in to various kinds of provocation.

[Petrov] What, in your opinion, was the cause of the recent events in Groznyy?

[Tikhomirov] This is the direct result of populist speeches by certain deputies. Whether by design or not, they sometimes bring to naught with their fine political statements all the attempts to foster an internal Chechen dialogue. I have great respect for Boris Nemtsov and Anatoliy Sobchak. But I do not understand how you can stop the war without answering the questions: What specifically must be done and how? Appealing for peace is not the same as reestablishing it. And what happened on this occasion? On 3 February, the head of the Chechen Republic announced the formation of a sociopolitical council. It looked as if all parties interested in peace, including the Dudayevites, could get around the negotiating table. They could have done so, but did not. On the contrary, having heard about the collection of signatures in Russia in support of a withdrawal of troops, they immediately began a large-scale rally in Groznyy, organized according to a well-oiled scenario. They whipped up people's emotions there to fever pitch. It is useless to speak about anything to an excited crowd.

[Petrov] With whom in your opinion is there any point in speaking, Vyacheslav Valentinovich?

[Tikhomirov] With those who are genuinely in favor of peace and stability in Chechnya. Such people do exist. And they certainly do not represent Dudayev or Maskhadov and their entourages. Incidentally, there has long been no unity of views among the latter. There is a constant struggle among them to redraw vitally important spheres of interest. When it is to their advantage and convenient to do so, they immediately reach for their pens. But when it is not, they immediately shy away from so doing. When they have lost the people's attention they even try to make themselves out to be mediators in the negotiations in an attempt to restore their former authority.

But what is there to talk about if these "leaders'" methods of struggle amount to stabbing people in the back, lies, and deception. The Dudayevites' so-called chief of staff, Maskhadov, is for example still holding a Russian enlisted man and an officer, who escorted him through the federal forces' positions after the negotiations last summer. And whom he promised under oath to release immediately.

The time of these "gang bosses" has passed and people understand this more and more.

But there are plenty of examples of constructive dialogue. What is more this process is gathering momentum. After residents handed in their weapons and gave assurances not to help the bandits, an airborne battalion was withdrawn from the vicinity of Shatoy. A peace agreement has been signed in the settlement of Novogroznenskiy. Similar proposals are being received with increasing frequency from the administration heads of other regions of the republic. They are all being scrutinized with urgency.

[Petrov] In this situation, the federal troops' missions are evidently far from routine. What do they consist in?

[Tikhomirov] Their missions really are very specific. Their main mission consists in helping to raise the authority of Chechnya's power structures, primarily that of the MVD [Internal Affairs Ministry], and in helping them to restore order within the republic's territory. In this respect, the federal forces are a guarantor of the reestablishment of peace, ready if necessary to use their hardware and weapons against the bandits. Our units will immediately leave those regions in which order has been established, the authorities are strong, and the Dudayevites have no place.

But there is only one response to those who will not lay down their arms. We have responded and will continue to respond to them with force. The forces in Chechnya will do everything to ensure that peace comes to the republic as soon as possible.

[Petrov] From the point of view of its strength, the federal grouping is a fairly impressive force. Apart from Army units, it includes MVD forces, and internal forces and FPS [Federal Border Service] subunits and units. Do you always succeed reaching a mutual understanding and in carrying out coordinated and precise operations?

[Tikhomirov] There were actually some problems with this earlier. The internal troops and the MVD units do nevertheless have a single modus operandi. The Army guys have their own view of these missions. After the creation of the grouping of forces joint staff the situation changed noticeably. The tactics of operations and their planning are now executed in a more considered and flexible fashion, taking account of specific tasks. Take, for example, an operation to neutralize gunmen. Army units take responsibility for, so to speak, the outer part of the mission, involving surrounding and blockading the bandits. MVD units perform tasks that are more familiar to them within the actual rayon or the settlement. This, as a rule, gives quite good results.

[Petrov] No doubt quite a few problems arise in the grouping's units and combined units as in any other military organism. Which of them worries you most of all as the commander?

[Tikhomirov] Those which are not resolved in an effective manner. I must point out that this does not occur because people are work-shy or ineffective. It is simply that not everything depends on them. How, for example, can you pay officers on time if there are no funds? The last time they received any money was in December. This goes for me too.

Therefore, to talk about the difficulties surrounding, say, the equipment allowance or any other difficulties is to talk about a long-standing problem. Which is once more being poorly dealt with. Even here in Chechnya.

[Petrov] Vyacheslav Valentinovich, if it is not a secret, what do you as a general on active service wish for most of all today?

[Tikhomirov] It's no secret. I really want there finally to be peace in the long-suffering land of Chechnya. If I succeed in bringing this even a little closer, I will consider my mission in Chechnya accomplished.

Political Reaction

Russia: Talks on Exchange of Chechen Gunmen for Hostages Fail

LD1702213396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2008 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MAKHACHKALA, Feb 17 (INTERFAX) — Talks between representatives of the Dagestani Interior Ministry and Chechen separatist rebels on the exchange of eight Chechen gunmen from a group led by Salman Raduyev for 12 Novosibirsk policemen taken hostage by Chechen militants ended in vain Saturday. Salman Raduyev led a Chechen gunmen's raid on the Kizlyar town in the internal Russian republic of Dagestan in early January.

The talks on the exchange brought no results because some important representatives of the Chechen separatist side were absent from the sitting, Dagestani First Deputy Interior Minister Valeriy Beyev told INTERFAX. The parties decided to continue the talks Sunday, he said.

Earlier, the Dagestani Prosecutor's Office decided to release from custody the Chechen gunmen taken prisoner by federal troops during the hostage operation against militants under Raduyev in Dagestan's Pervomayskoye village in mid-January.

This was done in line with the decision by the Russian Prosecutor General's Office to close the criminal case regarding the Chechen gunmen proceeding from a corresponding decision made by the Russian State Duma, Dagestani Deputy Prosecutor Khabibula Aliyev told INTERFAX. Such decisions were adopted in order to make it possible to exchange the arrested Chechen gunmen for the 12 policemen from Russia's Novosibirsk town taken hostage by separatist rebels, he said.

Russia: Chechen Directorate Turned Into Government Mission

LD2002145696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1353 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 20 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin issued an edict today which turns the territorial directorate of federal bodies of power in Chechnya into a Russian Federation government mission. Another edict appointed Nikolay Fedosov plenipotentiary representative of the Russian Government in the republic. This information was issued today by the Russian head of state's press service.

In particular, the edict stipulates that the mission being set up "will function in cooperation with the Government of the Chechen Republic untill the power of the Constitution of the Russian Federation and federal legislation is reestablished in full in the territory of the Chechen Republic, and the social and economic situation in this republic becomes stable."

"Decisions by the plenipotentiary representative of the Russian Government in the Chechen Republic on issues within his authority are mandatory for the federal bodies of the executive authority, the executive bodies of the members of the Russian Federation, the heads of enterprises, institutions, and organizations taking part in the restoration of the economy and vital services to the Chechen population," the edict says.

By another edict Boris Yeltsin appointed Nikolay Fedosov plenipotentiary representative of the Russian Government in Chechnya in the rank of deputy chairman of the Russian Government. Earlier Nikolay Fedosov worked as deputy head of the territorial directorate of the federal bodies of executive authority in Chechnya.

Russia: Zavgayev: Chechnya's Situation Must Improve by March

LD2002151796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1429 GMT 20 Feb 96

[By Sergey Bazhenov and Sergey Trofimov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, February 20 (ITAR-TASS) — The situation in Chechnya must essentially improve by March, 1996, head of the Chechen republic Doku Zavgayev told a press conference in Groznyy on Tuesday.

He said that the evidence of this is the present peace process based on the agreement on peace and accord.

A package of proposals by the Chechen leadership on the settlement of the situation in the republic, which was handed over to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, is directed at the acceleration of positive changes in the republic, Zavgayev said.

The key points in this package of proposals are measures for the development of the inter-Chechen dialogue, the liberation of forcibly held persons, the creation of new jobs and the financing of restoration works in the necessary volume, he noted.

The authorities of Chechnya plan to set up a powerful buffer zone along the North Caucasian range by signing peace and accord protocols with all southern districts of the republic, Zavgayev said.

In reply to a question by ITAR-TASS, the head of the Chechen republic said that in the near future a government delegation would visit the Nauri district to hold talks with the local power bodies on the signing of such a protocol.

Earlier, peace and accord protocols were signed by the authorities of the Shatoy and Gudermes districts. A preliminary agreement was reached with the administration of the Urus-Martan district.

If the government's initiative is implemented, a single zone will be created in the south of Chechnya along the North Caucasian range. This zone will be free from weapons, and after the withdrawal of militants and the federal troops, an order there will be maintained exclusively by local dwellers.

According to Zavgayev, the Chechen authorities made a final decision not to allow to hold a rally which the opposition plans to organise on February 23, the 52nd anniversary of the beginning of the deportation of the Chechen people.

The head of the Chechen republic told a news conference on Tuesday: "The rally should not be held. This would be outrageous. It is the same as to organise dances at the time of the epidemic of plague."

Russia: Afanasyevskiy To Represent Moscow at Contact Group Meeting

LD1602234496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2241 GMT 16 Feb 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 16 (INTERFAX) — Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolay Afanasyevskiy set off to Rome Friday. He will represent Russia at the meeting of heads of political departments of the contact group member-countries — Russia, the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany — and representatives of the European Union with leaders of Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia.

The United States was the initiator of this meeting to be held in the Italian capital Saturday. Its main aim is to analyze implementation of the Dayton agreements and to give new impetus to the peace process.

Afanasyevskiy will raise the issue of lifting sanctions with respect to Bosnian Serbs at the Rome meeting, sources in the Russian Foreign Ministry told INTERFAX. "Moscow believes that this issue is overripe and it is necessary to lift the sanctions without any delay."

The diplomat also said that the unprovoked arrest of a number of senior Bosnian Serb military by the Muslims had complicated the situation in Bosnia. He did not rule out that in Rome the future of two officers — General Djukic and Colonel Krsmanovic — would be discussed. Both have been taken to the Hague, where the International Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia is holding its sessions.

Afanasyevskiy also raised the issue of the next meeting of the contact group in Moscow. "The Bosnian settlement is a very delicate and fragile substance, it necessitates permanent attention," he said.

Russia: Novosibirsk Militiamen Exchanged for Chechen Fighters

LD1902181596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1744 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 19 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — All 12 Novosibirsk militiamen who were seized by Raduyev's detachment in the Dagestani village of Pervomayskoye were today handed over by the Dudayevites at about 2000 Moscow time in exchange for seven of Raduyev's fighters held in Pervomayskoye. The exchange took place in Novolakskiy district in Dagestan. An ITAR-TASS correspondent was informed of this today by Ruslan Valiyev, press secretary of State Duma Deputy Ramazan Abdulatipov. Valiyev is in constant radio and telephone contact with Abdulatipov, who is currently in Dagestan.

Abdulatipov is heading a State Duma mission to release those people who are being forcibly held in the Chechen Republic. The exchange of the militiamen for the fighters on the "all for all" principle was carried out with the assistance of this commission, as well as the leaders of a number of Dagestani national movements, Valiyev noted.

Russia: Deputies Meet Dudayev; Agree To Free Some Hostages

LD1702222696 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 17 Feb 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Unidentified correspondent, over video of hostage hand over, interview with deputy] Field commanders in a district of Chechnya today freed three Russian soldiers who were captured at the end of last year. They were handed over to their parents in the presence of State Duma Deputies Konstantin Borovoy and Arkadiy Yankovskiy, who came to Chechnya as representatives of the parliamentary commission to seek and free prisoners of war and hostages. Yesterday evening they had a meeting with Dzhkohar Dudayev, and reached agreement in principle on exchanging the 12 Novosibirsk policemen seized in Kizlyar in January.

[Begin Yankovskiy recording] The Chechen side is ready to carry out all the necessary actions in regard to freeing my fellow townsmen from Novosibirsk. [end recording]

[Correspondent] As regards the power engineers, builders, and priests who are also being held hostage by the fighters, their fate has not yet been determined. According to field commanders, these people are currently being held in a prison in a district in Chechnya. The fighters deny, however, that they have ever demanded ransom for them.

[Begin unidentified Chechen fighter recording] (?I have never seen anybody anywhere taking money for them).

[Correspondent] The 28 Russian Federation soldiers being held in Shatoy district are unlikely to be freed soon. Dudayev's spokesmen assert that there have never been any accords on this with the federal commanders.

For their part, the parliamentarians put two proposals to Dudayev. The first relates to signing a sort of pact on stopping seizing hostages. In addition to appealing for a solution to the problem of the prisoners of war and the hostages, the deputies suggested Dudayev should write a letter to Boris Yeltsin in which he could expound his ideas on starting a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The parliamentarians will fly to Moscow tomorrow, without waiting for Dudayev's reply, for consultations with the power ministries.

Russia: Chechnya's Deputy PM Calls For Early Elections

LD1802142596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1351 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Feb 18 (INTERFAX) — Chechnya's parliament must adopt an election law and resign, Chechnya's Deputy Prime Minister Beslan Gantamirov told INTERFAX Sunday.

He believes that Chechnya's current parliament is inefficient, "which can be judged from the fact that it has failed to gather the required number of deputies for taking decisions."

He also thinks that "the parliament, revived last autumn, has no moral right to make laws," because "the parliament's ambivalent moves caused massive disturbances in the autumn of 1991, when the deputies left the sinking ship like rats, throwing away their mandates."

To quote Gantamirov, early parliamentary elections are the main guarantee of stability in Chechnya.

Russia: Dudayev Warns of 'New World War'

NC1902100896 Istanbul SABAH in Turkish 12 Feb 96 p 18

[Report on an interview with Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev by SABAH correspondents Ramazan Ozturk and Benguc Ozerdem in Chechnya; date not given — punctuation as published]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Finding Dzhokhar Dudayev, the legendary Chechen leader sought by Russia for one and a half years, was like an adventure from a James Bond movie. [passage omitted]

Getting a permit from Russian officials to travel to Chechnya or to any other autonomous republic in the Caucasus is very difficult. We tried hard to persuade Russian officials. But they were reluctant to allow us to leave Moscow. Eventually we were forced to agree to leave the Russian Federation. But we decided to travel to Chechnya without asking any Russian official to issue the necessary documents. We crossed into Chechnya through Dagestan. We felt the cold breath of death engulf us. [passage omitted]

We were escorted to Dudayev's headquarters several days later. We would meet him for a second time. The vehicle that drove us to his headquarters did not have its lights on for security reasons. We were surrounded by snow. The temperature outside was probably minus 30 or 40. [passage omitted]

Dudayev was told that we were Turkish journalists. He was very happy. Western journalists had been unable to contact him during the past year. We were the first. Our meeting was warm. Dudayev's effective protection was obvious from the Rambo-like bodyguards he had around him. He was enthusiastic and determined. He was happy that SABAH would give him a chance to convey his views to Russia and the world at large.

Every Russian attack made Dudayev more angry. He drew strength from his anger. His people have strongly supported him. He remained determined. He looked like a tiger. We asked him to "outline his views on the war, particularly on when the fighting would end." His reply was long and alarming. He said:

"The war may continue another 50 years. Our dispute with Russia has lasted 400 years. We have never agreed with the Russians in that period. The war is the legacy of our forefathers. The just cause of the people cannot be suppressed through pressure. The Russians have tried to crush our resistance for centuries. But they have failed. We are standing on our feet. You see that with your own eyes. We want Russia to account for developments in the past. We want it to account for recent developments in our country. The Russians started the war. We will maintain it until we achieve our freedom. The war will continue until the last Chechen falls. It will then spread to the Caucasus. Our struggle will set an example to all the Islamic peoples in the Caucasus who share a similar fate with the Chechens. They will rise and take action. They too will achieve their independence. Dagestan is an example. The people of Dagestan support our struggle. Our successful raid on Pervomayskaye in Dagestan confirms that. The people supported our fighters in the clashes.

"The war is not a problem that concerns only the Chechen people. It concerns the entire world. It will turn into World War III if it is allowed to continue. Germany, France, Spain, Algeria, and many other countries had to fight to achieve their independence. We are doing the same.

"We have the secret map the Russians drew up for the Caucasus. They want to remove the native peoples of the Caucasus. For example, they want to create a Chechnya without the Chechen people living in it. The fate of the Ingush, Dagestan, Gabardina, Balkar, and Ossetian peoples will be similar. That is clear in the plans we have seized. The Russians plan to destroy the important centers in their countries. But we will not let that happen. We draw our strength from our faith. Another aspect of the war is as follows: The fighting is not only between the Russians and the Chechen people. The fighting is a war for balances. A vacuum of authority exists in Russia. The United States and Germany have put Russia in a bag and tied the top of it. The result is unpredictable. The Russian soldiers do not want to fight. We pity them because Yeltsin forced them to fight. They have been forced to die.

"We have 300,000 Fighters"

"We have exactly 300,000 fighters. They have nothing else to do. Russia made them like that. It left them no alternative. The fighting will not end for them when Chechnya achieves independence. It will be difficult to control them. Russia has extracted and transferred Chechnya's underground resources. But it failed to invest in our country. You must have seen that we have no infrastructure installations. The roads are covered with mud. As if all that is not enough, they have bombed and destroyed our country. Rebuilding our ruined country will not be easy. That is why I say that controlling the fighters after independence will be difficult. They will support Muslim resistance abroad when the war in Chechnya ends.

"Europe is merely watching the attacks on the Chechen people. Well, let it. We will ultimately take the war to Europe. The balance of forces will change if the current situation continues. The war will spread to Turkey. In other words, a new world war will be fought.

"The Faithful Will Achieve Victory"

"Pervomayskaye was not our main target. The air base in Dagestan's Ikizler [as published] District was our main objective. The Russians have fortified the air base. Helicopters and aircraft take off from it to bomb our country. The objective was to bomb and destroy the base. Our fighters achieved much of their objective. They were besieged by Russian military units when they tried to withdraw. Their escape route led to Pervomayskaye. Our fighters had to guarantee their escape. That is why they took hostages. We did not harm the hostages. The Russian soldiers killed many of them. There were many Russian troops. They had various types of arms. But they had no confidence in themselves. We achieved victory because we trusted ourselves.

"We will deal with the Russian prisoners in accordance with shari'ah. What shari'ah calls for will be applied. Shari'ah has applied in Chechnya for four years now.

"Russia often called for a peace agreement in the past. We agreed to hold talks. But Moscow disrupted the peace we agreed on. The Russian officials will call for peace talks again when our 300,000 fighters move to shift the fighting to Russia. That is when I will force them to account for their acts in Chechnya. Yeltsin's orders will no longer obstruct them.

"We Thank the Turkish People"

"We have not been directly linked with the hijacking of the Avrasya ferryboat in Turkey. The boat was commandeered by a group of individuals who sympathize with our cause. We could not control them. But we thank the people who organized meetings to support us during the incident. Their support has strengthened our struggle.

"We greatly welcomed the incident ending without bloodshed. The Avrasya incident has drawn the world's attention to the Chechen resistance again. We want to thank President Suleyman Demirel, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, and the political party leaders for their statements to defuse the tension during the incident. We will not forget the Turkish people's support."

Russia: Heavy Fighting Impairs Talks on Chechen Hostage Exchange

LD1802173996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1614 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MAKHACHKALA, Feb 18 (INTERFAX) — Talks on the exchange of eight Chechen gunmen from the Salman Raduyev-led unit for the 12 Novosibirsk riot police officers held by pro-Dudayev rebels were not held Sunday due to heavy fighting near the Chechen village of Novogroznenskiy, First Deputy Dagestani Interior Minister Valeriy Beyev told INTERFAX.

According to him, Dagestani Interior Ministry officials left for the site of the talks but returned after assessing the situation.

The talks are set to resume Monday, February 19, said Beyev.

Earlier, the Dagestani Prosecutor's Office ordered to release the rebels captured by federal forces during the Pervomayskoye operation in mid-January.

Deputy Dagestani Prosecutor Khabibula Aliyev told INTERFAX that it was done in accordance with the Russian Prosecutor General's Office resolution ending criminal proceedings against the rebels, issued on the basis of a corresponding State Duma resolution in order to make possible the exchange of the rebels for the Novosibirsk policemen.

Russia: Chechen Authorities Refuse To Allow 23 Feb Rally

LD2002134696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1235 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, February 20 (ITAR-TASS) — The Chechen authorities decided not to allow for the holding of a rally which the opposition plans for February 23, the day of the 52nd anniversary of the beginning of the deportation of Chechen people. Head of the Chechen Republic Doku Zavgayev told a news conference on Tuesday: "The rally should not be held. This would be outrageous. It is the same as staging celebrations at the time of plague."

CIS: CIS Interparliamentary Assembly Opens in St. Petersburg

LD1702131996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1253 GMT 17 Feb 96

[By Lyudmila Yermakova and Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ST.PETERSBURG, February 17 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin expressed confidence that requirements of the Commonwealth of Independent States for developing cooperation and good-neighbourly relations will find full expression in the operation of the Interparliamentary Assembly (MPA).

His address to participants in the seventh MPA plenary meeting was read out during the session which opened at the Tavricheskiy Palace in St. Petersburg on Saturday.

The meeting is attended by parliamentary delegations from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Tajikistan. The Ukrainian delegation is present as an observer.

Opening the session, speaker of the Federation Council (Russian parliament upper house) Yegor Stroyev who was elected chairman of the MPA Council on Friday, stressed that the assembly "makes an impressive contribution to the development of integration within the Commonwealth and creates common legal space of CIS countries."

He noted that the MPA experiences changes caused by elections of new national parliaments in the majority of countries.

New legislators elected by voters came to the political arena. This led to a change in the correlation of forces and in sentiments of people, which "should be taken into account in the activities of the assembly".

Speaking of the new Russian parliament, the Federation Council speaker stressed that its work should be aimed at creating civic accord and political stability in the country.

In Stroyev's opinion, this is possible if the society will continue to march on the road of democracy and reforms. However, reforms should be adjusted in the interests of people.

Stressing that "their curtailment is impossible", Stroyev noted that "Boris Yeltsin showed precisely this approach when he announced his decision to run for the second term".

The speaker said that the two chambers of the Russian parliament and the government agreed to hammer out a single state concept for law-making activities with clear-cut priorities, including laws on social protection of population.

Speaking of MPA activities, the head of its Council stressed that a mutual desire for closer cooperation, especially in the economy, again appeared in the recent past.

He called on assembly participants to conduct more active policy in peace processes, noting that the assembly "proved its importance as an efficient instrument for strengthening the Commonwealth".

Stroyev noted at the same time that the MPA "lagged somewhat behind requirements of life in drafting reference laws to create favourable conditions for economic activities".

Stroyev thanked Vladimir Shumeyko on behalf of assembly participants for active creative work. Shumeyko headed the MPA Council for two years. The new Council head announced a decision to confer the title of "Honorary MPA member" on Shumeyko.

CIS: Federation Council Speaker Elected Head of CIS Assembly

LD1602213296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2039 GMT 16 Feb 96

[By Lyudmila Yermakova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ST. PETERSBURG, February 16 (Itar-Tass) — Speaker of the Federation Council (upper house) Yegor Stroyev was unanimously elected chairman of the Council of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for one year.

Stroyev was put up for the position by Belarusian parliament spokesman Semen Sharetskiy who highly assessed "the combination of a scientists's intellect and a politician's experience in Yegor Semenovich (Stroyev)."

All the CIS parliament speakers supported his candidacy saying that it was the best option for the time being. However, they proposed electing him for one year to allow speakers of other parliaments to succeed him.

"I think that not only Russian representatives should preside over the Council," Azerbaijani parliament speaker Rasul Guliyev said.

Delegations of ten countries — Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Tajikistan — took part in the session. Uzbekistan, a full-fledged member of the Assembly, failed to send its representatives. Ukraine has the status of observer.

CIS: Stroyev: CIS Republics Beginning To Understand Each Other

LD1702210496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2014 GMT 17 Feb 96

[By Lyudmila Yermakova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ST. PETERSBURG, February 17 (Itar-Tass) — The period when ex-Soviet republics "ran away from each other" is over and has given way to "the process of mutual understanding and movement towards each other," Yegor Stroyev, the chairman of the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament, said.

Speaking at a press conference after the 7th session of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg on Saturday, Stroyev, who is also the chairman of the Assembly Council, said that the most difficult problems were resolved at the session jointly and "without collisions."

He said that the Council paid special attention to the development of model civil and criminal codes and other laws for the CIS states in order to promote deeper integration between former Soviet republics.

However, State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev believes that model laws adopted by the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly will become effective only if they are backed by corresponding legislations of the CIS countries.

He said that during the preparation of laws, committees should take into account the Assembly's recommendations to harmonize their legislations.

Otherwise, the CIS states may plunge themselves into a "war of laws" which will hamper political, economic and cultural ties between them, he said.

Speaking about the situation in Russia, Seleznev said that parliamentary elections in Russia were the main political result of the past year.

He noted that the new Duma is now "revising" draft laws left by the previous session of the lower house.

Seleznev stressed that the Duma will prioritise those bills which aim at strengthening inter-parliamentary ties between CIS states.

The Duma chairman supported the idea of setting up an inter-parliamentary commission to deal with local government issues which he described as a "headache" not only for Russia, but for many other CIS countries as well.

CIS: CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Ends

LD1702215596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2151 GMT 17 Feb 96

[By Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ST. PETERSBURG, February 18 (Itar-Tass) — CIS parliamentarians ended the 7th session of their Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg on Saturday after long debates on economic integration and harmonisation of economic legislations of their countries.

The Assembly participants approved the third part of a model civil code for the CIS countries which meet their economic interests, lays the legal foundation for market relations and eliminates major differences in the private law of each member country.

They also stressed the need to complete the development of a model civil code and discussed model laws "On the Protection of Economic Competitiveness," "On Financial and Industrial Groups" and "On Joint-Stock Companies" which establish effective mechanisms for regulating specific relations on commodity markets and implementing investment projects and programmes.

Special attention was paid to the need to work out a sound legislative basis coordinating CIS countries' efforts to fight crime.

The Assembly considered and approved model criminal, criminal procedural and criminal execution codes for the CIS states.

The participants supported a proposal made by the Byelorussian, Russian and Ukrainian delegations to appeal to the CIS parliaments, presidents and governments to provide the necessary support for Chernobyl clean-up workers.

On Abkhazia, the Assembly urged Georgia and Abkhazia to step up their efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia.

In its statement adopted on Saturday, the Assembly Council urged both sides "to reach, as soon as possible under the aegis of international organisations and with the participation of the Russian Federation, tangible results in ensuring a comprehensive settlement of the conflict, primarily an organised return of refugees and displaced persons."

Speaking at a press conference after the session, Yegor Stroyev, the chairman of the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament, said that the period when ex-Soviet republics "ran away from each other" is over and has given way to "the process of mutual understanding and movement towards each other."

Stroyev, who is also the chairman of the Assembly Council, said that the most difficult problems were resolved at the session jointly and "without collisions."

He said that the Council paid special attention to the development of model civil and criminal codes and other laws for the CIS states in order to promote deeper integration between former Soviet republics.

However, State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev believes that model laws adopted by the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly will become effective only if they are backed by corresponding legislations of the CIS countries.

He said that during the preparation of laws, committees should take into account the Assembly's recommendations to harmonize their legislations.

Otherwise, the CIS states may plunge themselves into a "war of laws" which will hamper political, economic and cultural ties between them, he said.

Speaking about the situation in Russia, Seleznev said that parliamentary elections in Russia were the main political result of the past year.

He noted that the new Duma is now "revising" draft laws left by the previous session of the lower house.

Seleznev stressed that the Duma will prioritise those bills which aim at strengthening inter-parliamentary ties between CIS states.

The Duma chairman supported the idea of setting up an inter-parliamentary commission to deal with local government issues which he described as a "headache" not only for Russia, but for many other CIS countries as well.

CIS: Tajik Government, Opposition Ready To Extend Cease-Fire

LD1802113796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0817 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ASHGABAT, February 18 (Itar-Tass) — The main result of the second round of the inter-Tajik talks, under the U.N. aegis, on national reconciliation, which ended in the Turkmenistan capital Ashgabat last night, was readiness of the sides to extend the term of the agreement on temporary ceasefire and suspention of other hostilities on the Tajik-Afghan border and inside the country.

The Ashkhabat declaration, signed by the sides, notes that "a positive decision has not been found due to conceptual differences in approaches to questions connected with the implementation of the agreement, and the sides agreed to continue the talks on this issue".

Delegation head of the United Tajik Opposition Khodji Akbar Turadzhonzoda and delegation head of the Tajik government Talbak Nazarov agreed to resume the Ashgabat talks at a time fixed by Ramiro Piriz Ballon, special envoy of the U.N. Secretary-General at the talks.

The Ashgabat declaration says that the delegation of the Tajik government came out with an initiative on holding a special session of the Tajik parliament with the participation of the United Tajik Opposition, the special envoy of the U.N. Secretary-General and representatives from states and international organisations, who are observers at the inter-Tajik talks.

The Tajik government made an obligation to the United Nations, the document notes, "to give full guarantee of security to a delegation of the United Tajik Opposition and to grant it adequate immunity and priviliges for the period of its visit to the republic".

An invitation to the delegation of the United Tajik Opposition will be sent by the U.N. observer mission in Tajikistan. The special session will be called three weeks after the completed second round of talks in Ashgabat.

While discussing political problems at the talks which started on January 26 with the participation of observers from Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Pakistan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the sides examined prospects for calling a Consultative Forum of Tajik peoples and drafted the text of an appropriate agreement.

The sides also considered a question of forming a National Reconciliation Council. However, the sides did not reach agreement "due to differences of basic nature".

Summing up the results of the second round, Turadzhonzoda specially pointed to the role of the Turkmen Foreign Ministry in maintaining the process of the dialogue and rapprochement of the two sides.

He expressed hope that "wise decisions" would be found on issues which remained outside the reached agreement for the time being.

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 20 Feb

LD2002070696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0606 GMT 20 Feb 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW February 20 (Itar-Tass) — Follows a review of Tuesday's Moscow-based newspapers dated February 20.

The newspapers highlight German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit to Russia, report the situation in Novogroznenskiy township in Chechnya, where Federal troops have blockaded up to 1,000 Dudayev militants, and run articles in memory of the patriarch of Russian soccer, Nikolay Starostin, who died on the night from Friday to Saturday, a week before his 94th birthday.

IZVESTIYA on German Chancellor's visit to Russia.

The newspaper notes that Kohl became the first leader of the Group of Seven countries to hurry to Moscow immediately after Boris Yeltsin announced his decision to run for a second term.

"The free and easy conversation tete-a-tete at the fire-place in the Senate Hall resembled, rather, an exchange of compliments which, incidentally, did not conceal Kohl's concern over the situation in Russia anf particularly the state of affairs in Chechnya," the newspaper writes.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI carries an article about the German Chancellor's visit to Russia under the headline "Helmut Kohl demonstrates support for Boris Yeltsin".

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on NATO's eastward expansion.

The newspaper expresses the view that at the talks in Moscow Helmut Kohl will try to play the issue down. "Meanwhile it is high time Germany made up its mind as to what is more important to it. The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland as, let us put it straight, not quite big military-and-political allies, or such colossus as Russia which remains in a state of absolute uncertainty about the security of its western borders?"

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on a new phase of reforms in Russia.

Under the headline "The people, not the Kremlin, now fashions the ideology of power", the newspaper runs an article by Nikolay Yegorov, Chief of the Presidential Staff.

"We can confidently say that Russian has worthily passed through the hardest period of reforms and is entering a new phase of the process. While summing up the results of the development of Russian statehood over the five years of Boris Yeltsin's presidency, one must emphasise that the preservation of the unity and teritorial integrity of the Russian Federation has become the most important result," Yegorov writes.

RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA on the defaults of payments.

Nikolay Yegorov, Chief of the Presidential Staff, in an interview with the newspaper, touched upon wage arrears, mutual debts and defaults of payment.

Previously the country lacked material resources, whereas now the country has them available, he said. "Since the President said, he will keep his word. Without any additional emission of money and without additional funds," Yegorov said.

TRUD on the lack of economic stability.

The newspaper carries an interview with State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznyov, who believes that there is no economic stability in real life so far. "I am deeply convinced that the country will begin to 'get on its feet' when a State programme for the regulation of basic branches of the economy, I repeat, only basic ones, will be enacted in practice, the prorgramme which would be thought out in every detail," Seleznyov said.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA on the situation in Novogroznenskiy township in Eastern Chechnya, where Federal troops have blockaded up to 1,000 Dudayev militants.

The newspaper notes that Federal units have set up special corridors through which civilians leave the township.

IZVESTIYA publishes a letter sent to the newspaper by Ramazan Abdulatipov, Yegor Gaydar, Sergey Kovalyov, Grigory Yavlinskiy and other political figures who convey their proposals on how to settle the crisis in Chechnya.

Russia: Germany's Kohl Arrives in Moscow

LD1802212296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2010 GMT 18 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS diplomatic correspondent Nikolay Kalintsev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 18 Feb — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl arrived in Moscow on Sunday evening on a three-day official visit. At Vnukovo-2 his Luftwaffe-1K aircraft was welcomed by Oleg Davydov, deputy chairman of the Russian Government, Vladislav Terekhov, Russia's ambassador to Germany, and other Russian officials. A guard of honor was lined up on the airfield and the state anthems of Germany and Russia were played.

The head of the German Government will be officially welcomed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin in St. George's Hall of the Kremlin on Monday [19 February] morning. Friendly and trusting ties were established between the leaders of the two major European states a long time ago, which has a positive effect on bilateral state relations. Boris Yeltsin and Helmut Kohl will have a tete-a-tete conversation that is expected to last for almost an hour. After that, the talks will be held between the delegations of the two countries.

Helmut Kohl is also expected to meet Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, Federation Council Chairman Yegor Stroyev, and Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev.

Russia: Yeltsin, Kohl: Positions 'Coincide' on NATO Expansion

LD1902115496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1058 GMT 19 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 19 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — On international problems and bilateral issues "our positions coincide almost entirely, although we might be in slightly different keys on problems concerning NATO expansion eastward," Boris Yeltsin told journalists today after a one-on-one meeting lasting two and one- half hours with FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The Russian president explained: "We are firmly and strictly against NATO expanding eastward toward Russia's borders. My friend Helmut believes that this problem should be shelved for a long while and not talked about, so that people can calm down and meanwhile consider other solutions."

Helmut Kohl said in reply to a question from ITAR-TASS that one possible solution to the problem is to set up a Europe-wide security system. "We must act to prevent new barriers going up in Europe. We have to resolve these matters calmly and wisely. I am not going to pursue a policy which could jeopardize the new friendly, partnership relations between Russia and Germany," he said.

Russia: Yeltsin Notes Complete Identity of Views With Kohl

LD1902195396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1759 GMT 19 Feb 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Official talks were held in the Kremlin Monday between Russia's President Boris Yeltsin and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Opening the one-on-one meeting Yeltsin said: "The situation in Russia and in the world as a whole has prompted me and Helmut Kohl to discuss the problems of our countries' bilateral and multilateral relations."

Yeltsin and Kohl changed the protocol and continued their confidential talks instead of holding them in the presence of other officials, as envisaged in the program.

"We would like our children and grandchildren to live in peace and maintain relations of friendship, the way Helmut and I do," said Yeltsin.

Commenting on the results of the Russian-German summit, Yeltsin said that "our views were practically identical on all of the discussed international and bilateral problems." He also said that the talks dealt with "all of the most complicated issues, including NATO and the Chechnya-related issues."

"If there was a slight difference in approaches to the NATO problem, it was over tonality," said Yeltsin.

"We resolutely oppose NATO's enlargement to the Russian borders," said Yeltsin. "The Russian people know what NATO is," he added.

"Kohl believes that the solution of this problem should be put off to a longer perspective," said Yeltsin. He also quoted Kohl as saying that people must calm down and that in the meantime politicians should find ways of solving this problem.

Kohl confirmed that he had proposed postponing the solution of the problem of NATO's expansion to a later date. "This is not an issue to be discussed during the election year, particularly the year of presidential elections in the U.S.," said Kohl. Making his point clear, he said that in the U.S. there are voters of Eastern European origin to whom certain political circles are appealing. "I think that the interests of Russia's security should be taken into account, but other people's right to join NATO should not be neglected, either." He said that "this problem will be settled, but not now."

Yeltsin criticized the German media for what he called "misinformation and dishonest position in relation to Russia." "This is dangerous not only in view of the upcoming presidential elections, but also because this influences the minds of the German youth." "One can't tolerate the German youth's upbringing from anti-Russian positions, from the positions of fear of Russia," he said.

Yeltsin said that he had informed Kohl of the forthcoming presidential campaign and that he openly talked with him about all candidates with whom he would have to deal during the election campaign.

"It's clear," said Yeltsin, "that Chancellor Kohl will not be able to help me in doing so, although the Germans who live in Russia and have Russian passports will take part in voting." "I don't think Kohl has talked with them about this," he said.

He said he had assured Kohl of his determination to promote and implement the reforms. "I told him that I will not depart an inch from the reform. I will seek re-election for the sake of the reform," he said.

Kohl expressed satisfaction that Russia had been admitted to the Council of Europe. "Russia is Europe's most important eastern partner. Europe's new development largely depends on Russia and on German-Russian relations in general," he said.

"It's none of my business to interfere in the presidential campaign in Russia," he went on to say. "But as the chancellor of Germany I welcome the connection between Yeltsin's decision to run for re-election and his commitment to reform," he said.

He also said that the former German Democratic Republic was a vivid example of the difficulties arising during the transition to market relations. He said that "despite criticism he is convinced that relations with Russia should be broadened even though Russia is experiencing serious difficulties of the transitional period."

Yeltsin told journalists that during the talks the sides reaffirmed the importance of broadening trade and economic cooperation.

He also expressed concern that the German business circles' interest in Russia had diminished over the past two-three months which he explained by the results of the parliamentary elections (won by the Communists). He expressed the opinion that "the German business people might be waiting for the end of June so they could see the future of the reform."

To quote Yeltsin, there are 200 major joint programs "stretching from the land to outer space". He also expressed readiness to sell Germany licenses for implementing modern technological projects which cannot be properly financed by Russia.

Yeltsin told Interfax following the talks that two separate commissions would hand him proposals on "how to end the war in Chechnya shortly."

He explained that he meant the commission led by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and the commission of the Presidential Council, led by Member of the Presidential Council Emil Payin.

Both commissions work separately, said Yeltsin. Out of the entire gamut of proposals they are to choose one, each, which is to be handed to the president, he continued.

Kohl welcomed Yeltsin's determination to settle the Chechen problem as soon as possible.

Speaking about changes in Russian-German relations, Kohl said that as he was walking in the Kremlin Monday he pictured in his mind's eye the face of Andrey Gromyko (member of the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee and foreign minister of the former Soviet Union) during such talks.

"The situation has changed and I'm received here as a friend. The history of our countries is not only the history of wars but, to a larger extent, the history of good relations," said Kohl.

Yeltsin's Press Secretary Sergey Medvedev announced that shortly before the talks which were held in the Kremlin's Senate building, Yeltsin acquainted Kohl with the restored historical building of the Kremlin.

"Reconstruction lasted for two years. The entire Senate building was restored as conceived by architect Kazakov. The builders removed the elements added in later years, and added what the building lacked. The colors of the halls were restored on the basis of the original color pictures," said Yeltsin.

Yeltsin told Kohl that the G8 meeting, scheduled for April 1996, will be held in the Catherine Hall of the Senate building which is one of the most beautiful halls of the Kremlin.

Medvedev announced that the reconstruction of the building was not over yet. There are plans to create a number of historical and cultural zones in the Senate building, which will be used for exhibitions and will subsequently be opened for visitors.

In the afternoon, Chancellor Kohl met with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov.

An official dinner will be given in the Kremlin's Faceted Hall on behalf of President Yeltsin in honor of Chancellor Kohl in the evening.

On February 20 Kohl will visit the cemetery of German POWs in Lyublino (a district of Moscow) and then have talks with Chairman of the State Duma Gennadiy Seleznev and Chairman of the Federation Council Yegor Stroyev.

At midday Kohl is to give a final press conference.

On Tuesday evening Chancellor Kohl will fly out to St. Petersburg where he will stay until February 21.

Russia: Chernomyrdin, Kohl Discuss Bilateral Cooperation

LD1902195496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1937 GMT 19 Feb 96

[By Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 19 (Itar-Tass) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl supported the Russian government's view that the ongoing reform in the country should be socially oriented, Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Oleg Davydov told Itar-Tass.

Davydov took part in a meeting between Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Kohl which focused on economic cooperation between Russia and Germany.

He quoted Kohl as saying that the Erhard model of a socially oriented market economy which has been widely used in Europe is more suitable for Russia than other economic models.

The chancellor offered assistance in training Russian specialists in small business management. The sides agreed that an intergovernmental agreement to this effect may be signed in the very near future.

Kohl and Chernomyrdin expressed concern that trade turnover between the two countries has not increased in the last two years remaining at the level of 24 billion DM [German marks].

The sides also discussed prospects for bilateral cooperation in such areas as space, conversion, oil and gas, machine building and others. They also touched on the question of greater access for Russian goods to European markets.

Russia: Primakov Sees Kohl Visit as Yeltsin Election Support

LD2002104896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0938 GMT 20 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 20 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Russian Federation Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov assessed the visit to Moscow by FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl as support for Boris Yeltsin in his election campaign.

In an interview which he gave to ITAR-TASS after the official farewell ceremony in the St. George Hall of the Great Kremlin Palace, Yevgeniy Primakov said: "Far from every one in Germany was in favor of Chancellor Kohl's visit to Moscow. But the time chosen for the visit and the visit itself underscores the support that Helmut Kohl is giving Russian President Boris Yeltsin in his election campaign."

The minister noted that the level of relations between Russia and Germany are also being maintained in the personal relations between the leaders of the two states. In these conditions the meeting between the two leaders provides the impulse for the multilateral development of relations in the subsequent period, he said.

"Relations between Russia and Germany are not only measured by the fact that Germany is Russia's biggest trade partner, by the fact that it differs from other countries in the volume of investments in our economy, but also by the fact that we have a wide range of mutual interests today," the minister stated, having noted that this applies first and foremost to stability in Europe. "Naturally there are certain differences of opinion, but they do not prevent us from seeking solutions, since relations have reached a level where this is possible," Yevgeniy Primakov said.

Russia: Kohl Remarks at Kremlin Dinner 19 Feb

LD2002112496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1814 GMT 19 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 19 Feb — "Russia is experiencing a complex period, but only a naive person would expect such huge changes to be fast and painless. There is no alternative to the reform policy and I am confident that Russia will be successful. Russians are a great and very proud people with a grand future," FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl said, making a toast at a dinner given in his honour by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, at the (Kremlin's) Hall of Facets.

Helmut Kohl stressed that although dramatic changes are taking place in the world and a century that brought about many deaths and a great deal of suffering and tears will end in four years. [sentence as transmitted] Our main task is to bring up young people in the spirit of friendship, so that in the 21st century our children can live in peaceful and calm conditions. Russians and Germans alike must make their own contribution to the attainment of this goal, the chancellor said. He said that the history of relations between Germany and Russia is not just confined to wars and calamities, for it also contains grand periods of peaceful life. It is precisely upon these traditions that we must focus our attention, Helmut Kohl stressed.

The chancellor noted the importance of Russia's membership of the Council of Europe. He said: "These are sincere words of greetings addressed to the Russian people. However, at the same time, it is an invitation to continue the reforms and to move toward stability".

Helmut Kohl particularly stressed the importance of Russian President Boris Yeltsin's decision to seek a second term in office, linking this to his intention to continue the reforms. This is very important, and we do not just want to convey friendly wishes to Russia, but also to render such assistance as we are capable of, especially in the economic area, the FRG chancellor stressed.

Russia: Kohl, Yeltsin Discuss NATO Expansion, Reforms

AU2002120296 Frankfurt/Main FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE in German 20 Feb 96 pp 1,2

[Report by "C.G.": "Kohl in Moscow — Yeltsin Raging Against NATO's Expansion to the East"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 19 February — During a two-and-a-half-hour talk with Chancellor Kohl on Monday [19 February] Russian President Yeltsin raged against the plans to expand NATO. Kohl smiled slightly when Yeltsin — gesticulating animatedly and hardly letting the interpreter put a word in — called out: "The Russians know what NATO means." He is almost 100-percent in agreement with Kohl regarding the assessment of international and bilateral issues — with the exception of the issue of NATO. "Friend Helmut" thinks that one might postpone the matter. Yeltsin says that the project should be shelved: "In the meantime one can think of a different decision." Kohl responded that the point is not opposing Russia. NATO's expansion is not a topic that is suitable for election campaigns — also not for the presidential election campaign in the United States. He is "firmly convinced" that there are possibilities to include Russia's security concerns in the considerations but, at the same time, preserve the right of other states to decide in favor of joining an alliance.

Kohl referred to the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], which grants the members free decisions in many questions. "I am sure that we will find a solution, but certainly not now." He is in complete agreement with Yeltsin that the opportunity to improve German-Russian relations must not be gambled away. "No new trenches must develop." There is, Kohl said, "the possibility of good models for thinking so that such trenches do not develop." He urgently advises to do what is necessary at a time "when one can talk in peace and quiet." This is the Federal Government's policy. "I will beware of endangering the newly gained and good relations with Russia."

By warning against using NATO expansion as an election campaign issue, Kohl also referred to the U.S. Republicans, who, hoping for the votes of Americans of Polish origin, have hurt Russia's pride. It was uncertain whether Kohl expressed this view to Yeltsin, because the conversation was held only in the presence of a Russian and a German adviser. However, Kohl obviously agrees with President Clinton in his assessment. On Saturday [17 February] Kohl had telephone conversations with Clinton and French President Chirac; French Prime Minister Juppe, who was in Moscow last week, had told the chancellor that Yeltsin is in good condition. Obviously, they confirmed each other's view that Yeltsin's reelection in June would be better for the West and for the reform attempts in Russia than if another candidate succeeded him, since reform politician Yavlinskiy has too little support among the people.

Western politicians assume that, if he is reelected, Yeltsin will be ready to come to an understanding, even if it is just because he needs economic aid and Russia's acceptance as the eighth full member into the current Group of Seven of the most important industrial nations. Not every Russian president can expect his country to be admitted into the G-7 group, it is indicated with a view to a potential abating of reforms under Yeltsin's potential successor.

Yeltsin said that if he is reelected, he will not retreat one centimeter on the reform course. Already now "the reforms are not moving backwards." Yeltsin told Kohl about the election campaign and the other candidates with whom he has to compete. He is running "to be able to continue the reforms." Kohl praised Yeltsin's "work for the progress of the reform process" and pointed to the expectations of the Council of Europe, which have been linked with Russia's acceptance. Germany has essentially supported Russia's being accepted into the Council of Europe. The quality of the German-Russian relations is important for the future and a yardstick for the situation in all of Europe. Kohl called Russia the most important and most powerful neighbor of Germany in the east. It is gratifying that Yeltsin establishes "a personal link" between his candidacy and the reforms.

Yeltsin told Kohl that he intends to settle the conflict in Chechnya peacefully in the next few weeks, even before the presidential elections. Kohl supported him in this intention so that the suffering of the people can be ended. He wished Yeltsin "luck for the difficult task." Because of the reporting on Russia's actions in Chechnya, but obviously also with a view to NATO's expansion, Yeltsin addressed harsh accusations against the German "media" in another temper tantrum. They are spreading untruths and fan the fear of Russia. Russia's image in Germany is too negative. Kohl answered that he did not incite the criticism in the public. There is a free press. Kohl said that he himself has often been subjected to criticism. If one is used to it, "one notices it only occasionally; life is too beautiful to get angry about that." Yeltsin is probably just not used to it. Originally the delegations accompanying Kohl and Yeltsin should have attended the meeting, but the laid tables remained unused, which indicates the intensity of the fireside talk in the Oval Hall of Yeltsin's just renovated residence in the Kremlin. Kohl probably did not yet describe the detailed outlines of the previously mentioned "models of thinking" regarding NATO's expansion and Russia's integration in the security construct. First of all, Kohl wants to prevent positions from becoming increasingly rigid in the election campaign. Without discussing economic projects more in detail, Yeltsin recommended expanding cooperation in business. "We want our children and grandchildren not only to live in peace together but also in such friendship as we live with Helmut," the president said, who looked in good shape but was stiff in his movements. In the afternoon Kohl met with Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and Foreign Minister Primakov.

Russia: Kohl Views NATO Expansion at News Conference

LD2002131196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1303 GMT 20 Feb 96

[By Nikolay Kalintsev and Yuriy Kozlov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 20 (Itar-Tass) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl declared for taking into account the interests of Russia's security to the utmost in deciding the matter of NATO's eastward expansion.

Speaking here at a news conference on the result of his official visit to Moscow, Kohl confirmed that there are differences of opinion between Russia and Germany on this problem. The German Chancellor sees the way out in developing relations of partnership and cooperation with "Russian friends" and "protecting and observing" their security interests alongside with the admission of central and east European countries into the North Atlantic Alliance. "I object to the emergence of new divides in Europe as a result of NATO's expansion," Kohl said.

Kohl believes that extraneous factors, including the presidential elections in Russia and in the United States, are now added to the problems. It is no secret that rhetoric of candidates to presidency in the United States is determined by an aspiring president wishing to earn the votes of some community, for instance Polish, Kohl said. This prompts response from Moscow, the Chancellor said. In this connection he suggested that the decision of this complicated problem be put off till after the elections in the United States so as to resume its debating in a calm atmosphere.

The Chancellor dismissed assertions that "he was speaking in a different language in Moscow". "I say in Moscow the same things I said in the Polish sejm and in the U.S. congress. East and central European countries have a right to enter NATO, but Russia's interests should be taken into considerations during their admission into NATO," the Chancellor said.

Russia: German Chancellor Visits Federal Assembly

LD2002131996 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Report over video by correspondent Ye. Kuznetsova; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [FRG Chancellor] Helmut Kohl today familiarized himself with the work of the Federal Assembly. According to State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznov, Kohl was most interested in issues relating to the interaction of the two chambers of parliament.

Today the FRG chancellor met with Yegor Stroyev, chairman of the Federation Council. According to the speaker of parliament's upper chamber, Helmut Kohl enjoyed learning about the Russian structure for forming the Federal Assembly. Replying to questions put by journalists, Yegor Stroyev did not deny that Kohl's visit may be assessed as support for Boris Yeltsin on the eve of the presidential elections.

[Begin Stroyev recording] Let us be honest about it. This is an experienced politician and one of the most gifted in the world today, one of the most capable people in the Western world. And I think that his visit would be support for anyone, including yourselves. [end recording]

[Announcer] This evening Helmut Kohl will arrive in St. Petersburg as part of his official visit to Russia.

Russia: Kohl on Future Bilateral Economic Cooperation

LD2002132496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1240 GMT 20 Feb 96

[By Nikolay Kalintsev and Yuriy Kozlov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 20 (Itar-Tass) — Russia and Germany intend to sign in the second half of this year an agreement precluding dual taxation, Chancellor Helmut Kohl told a press conference here today.

Summing up the results of his official visit to Moscow, the Chancellor said economic questions featured prominently in his talks with the Russian leaders.

Turnover between the two countries has stabilised, albeit at a low level, the Chancellor said. For this reason, it is necessary to make energetic efforts in order to raise the effectiveness of economic relations between Russia and Germany, particularly in the fields of power engineering, high technologies and joint ventures, Kohl said.

German capital investments in the Russian economy are growing but there are many obstacles to their further growth, associated, among other things, with the overall criminal situation in Russia, the Chancellor said.

Kohl expressed the hope that the signing of an agreement on avoiding dual taxation will facilitate the growth of investments.

"My aim is to return, however strange it may sound, to 1910, when Germans could freely study in St. Petersburg University and Russians in my own University at Heidelberg, and their diplomas were recognised by both sides," Kohl noted in discussing prospects for the development of Russian-German cooperation.

The Chancellor pointed to the encouragement of small businesses in Russia as one of the directions in the development of bilateral economic ties. He recalled that Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin had shown interest in Germany's project of sending skilled master craftsmen to China to provide vocational training there.

The Chancellor said exchanges of that kind were also possible in relations with Russia.

Russia: Primakov Interviewed on NATO, Other Issues

LD1802220896 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian
1900 GMT 18 Feb 96

[Interview with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov with unidentified correspondent, place, date not given — recorded; from the "Sunday" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Nelli Petkova] What distinguishes the current political situation in Russia cannot but affect the nature of our relations with other states. The West is attentively pursuing the situation in Russia and it is more than likely that it has adopted a wait and see policy. How is the work of the Russian Foreign Ministry progressing in these conditions?

An interview we have obtained from Yevgeniy Primakov, the foreign minister, gives an insight into this. It was his first big interview following his appointment.

The minister began his conversation with our correspondent by listing the problems he had tackled over the past week.

[Begin recording] [Primakov] You know, the schedule was so packed that I will simply be unable to tell you about everything. There were two telephone conversations which, from my point of view, were very important. One conversation took place at my initiative. I telephoned the French Foreign Minister [Herve] de Charette. The second telephone conversation took place at the initiative of U.S. Secretary of State [Warren] Christopher. Both conversations were devoted to some extent, or, rather, were mainly devoted to the development of the situation in Yugoslavia and the crisis there. The point is that there are now worries that the Dayton or Paris agreements are beginning to stall. I think that the main blame here does not now attach to the Serbs, not to the Serbs.

[Correspondent] The NATO secretary general recently said in London that the issue was, as it were, unequivocal: We will expand eastward, no matter what anyone tells us or points out to us.

[Primakov] Yes, statements are made, and correspondingly we make statements as well. You understand, we are evidently being offered — and this was even mentioned during a conversation I had with a colleague of mine from the West — we are evidently being offered a hedgehog to sleep with.

[Correspondent] And how should this bed-sharing with a hedgehog end?

[Primakov] I think it is necessary to throw the hedgehog out of bed, that is how it should end. I think that we should think about solutions, and that this pause which has now emerged should be used to find some solutions. In any case, I can tell you firmly, I have a corresponding mandate from the president here — Russia will not agree that NATO's expansion is a foregone conclusion.

[Correspondent] What shape can our countermeasures take?

[Primakov] I will not tell you about it.

[Correspondent] Did you discuss any possible solutions with the U.S. secretary of state when you met him near Helsinki?

[Primakov] We touched on some proposals and we made certain proposals. However, there has so far been no corresponding positive reaction to this.

However, we are not discouraged here, because it is necessary to seek a solution. We do not want a confrontation.

I think we should have a more realistic approach to all world affairs. It seems to me that the multi-structured world which is now emerging will consist of numerous poles and Russia should, to some extent, be equidistant to all these poles. Russia should not be too close to any one pole, not so close as to be put in a position of confrontation with any other poles.

[Correspondent] It is good that we have just touched on this question, because...

[Primakov, interrupting] Let us go back to my schedule, ha, ha, ha. I want to tell you that it has not just been confined to this issue all this past week. Other events took place, too.

I visited Gennadiy Nikolayevich Seleznev, chairman of the State Duma. We had a rather detailed conversation. I think that the Foreign Ministry should maintain the closest of ties with the parliament.

[Correspondent] Yes, indeed, you somehow have an altogether different dialogue going with the parliament, something on which many people have now focused their attention.

Incidentally, the parliament is due to consider the START-2 treaty. As far as I know, you want this document ratified. How important is it for Russia?

[Primakov] There are some worries, and I have them, too. For instance, I think that if the difference between tactical and strategic anti-missile defenses fails to be clearly defined, the difference between the theater ABM [anti-ballistic missile], as they put it, meaning the tactical ABM defenses and the strategic ABM defenses, then it is going to be very difficult to have a course toward the ratification of this treaty. In any case, I can just see the opposition to this within the Duma.

We are in favor of ratification without fail. The president submitted this treaty to the Duma for ratification. At the same time, I think that those in the Duma who think that we should, as it were, ensure full guarantees that the ABM treaty will not be scrapped are right.

[Correspondent] We have serious problems in our relations with Ukraine, with Kiev. It seems to me that a complicated destiny now awaits the treaty between Russia and Ukraine, not least because the parliament has its own objections to the division of the Black Sea Fleet.

[Primakov] We have certain accords at the presidential level, concerning the Black Sea Fleet. Intensive consultations on this issue are currently underway. I think that some sort of solution will, or can be found. Without that it will, of course, be difficult to sign the treaty, I think.

[Correspondent] And what do you think of Georgia's current desire to have a part of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, too?

[Primakov] Well, a desire is not tantamount to possession, as they say.

[Correspondent] When you decided to take the job, did you think that you might have to carry on after the presidential elections, irrespective of who becomes the president?

[Primakov] No, I did not think of that. All in all, I do not think of how I will have to work in the future. What I do think about is that I have a great deal of work to do right now, right now. This work is my life and I really do give of myself, as much as my strength and my potential will allow me, of course.

In my work I implement, I endeavor to implement the foreign policy course which is in keeping with Russia's foreign policy interests.

Naturally, it is the president who remains the determining figure in the foreign policy area and the elaboration of foreign policy decisions. Here I yet again was able to convince myself of the enormous role played by the Foreign Ministry both in the elaboration of decisions and in the implementation of decisions.

[Correspondent] That is to say, you wish to retain all the best traditions?

[Primakov] Yes, absolutely. [end recording]

Russia: Foreign Ministry on Need To Revise CFE Flank Limits

LD1602235096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2241 GMT 16 Feb 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 16 (Interfax) - Moscow thinks that flank limits introduced for Russia by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe should be revised by the May conference on this treaty, a high-ranking staffer of the Russian Foreign Ministry told Interfax Friday.

Quantity limits on conventional armaments, both general and for flank regions, entered into force on November 17, 1995, said the diplomat.

"Russia has fulfilled its obligations on general reduction of the armaments," he noted. "Still, some objective reasons, including developments in Chechnya, prevent Russia from fulfillment of its obligations on the flank region, which includes the Leningrad and North-Caucasian military districts."

NATO understood the Moscow concern and put forward its proposals on a corrected map of flank limits for Russia. Moscow made counter initiatives.

The stands are being coordinated both on the bilateral basis and at the joint consultative group. "The sides are discussing changes in the map of regions covered by the treaty, and some additional measures for control, transparency and deterrence," said the diplomat.

"The search for compromise is uneasy," he admitted. "But Moscow still hopes that a decision to satisfy Russia and its partners in the treaty will be found before May."

Commenting on the May conference, the diplomat said they want "it to sum up the results of the treaty fulfillment and adjust the document to new military and political realities."

"The treaty has played its role as an instrument to lessen the military potential. It has resulted in reduction of about 50,000 pieces of heavy armaments and 2,700 inspections."

"Since the time the document was signed in 1990, the situation in Europe has radically changed. The Warsaw Treaty organization ceased to exist, new states appeared on territory of the former Soviet Union with their priorities in the defense policy, and regional conflicts began," said the diplomat. "Thus, there is a need to upgrade the treaty and keep it as the core of a future collective security system in Europe."

Russia thinks this will not necessarily entail further reductions of conventional armaments. "Some countries may not need it," he said.

"The treaty could be open for all European states. (It now has 30 members - IF)," noted the foreign ministry staffer.

He thinks that "measures to modernize the treaty will hardly be taken at the May conference. But this forum could launch negotiations on the document modernization."

Russia: Moscow Makes 'Important' Contribution to Bosnia Settlement

LD1802161796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1302 GMT 18 Feb 96

[By Aleksey Bukalov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ROME, February 18 (Itar-Tass) — "Russian diplomacy plays an imprtant and constructive role in normalising the situation around the conflict in former Yugoslavia," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolay Afanasyevskiy stressed in an interview with Itar-Tass here on Sunday.

In Afanasyevskiy's opinion, the first round of the emergency conference on a Bosnian settlement made it possible to outline clearly the entire range of problems demanding attention of the world community.

Russia's efforts to create a climate of confidence at the conference and its unbiased approach to all participants in a settlement are an important prerequisite for a positive outcome of the Rome meeting which was called as a result of the joint initiative of Russia and the United States, the Russian diplomat noted.

The top-level talks on Bosnia, held behind closed doors, attract attention of the Italian and world press. More than 400 reporters are accredited at the forum.

The Rome-based influencial newspaper Messagero notes in its today's commentary that "nobody is without sins in Bosnia", adding that "a report on a terrorist school is an extremely serious accusation and can be a reason for a deep split between the IFOR [Implementation Force] and the Sarajevo government".

Russia: Government Wants Sanctions on Bosnian Serbs Lifted

LD1902144896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1422 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 19 (Interfax) — Moscow made it clear once again that it wants the sanctions imposed on Bosnian Serbs to be lifted shortly.

Moscow believes that "the sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs should be lifted within the next few days," deputy Foreign Minister Nikolay Afanasyevskiy told Interfax on Monday.

He said "all conditions have been met, as publicly confirmed this past weekend in Rome at a meeting on Bosnian settlement between Presidents Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Hercegovina and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, as well as representatives of the international Contact Group."

Afanasyevskiy, who attended the meeting as Russia's representative, said that the participants reaffirmed that all procedures needed for lifting the sanctions will be completed in the very near future.

A report confirming the Bosnian Serbs' compliance with the agreement is due to be submitted to the U.N. security Council by IFOR commanders on February 22.

The diplomat recalled that under the Dayton Agreements, the sanctions are to be lifted after elections in Bosnia.

In Rome, the Russian delegation urged the Contact Group, international organizations and IFOR commanders to "be impartial with regard to all Bosnian parties."

"This is the only approach to ensure a long-term settlement of the Bosnian issue," Afanasyevsky added.

At the same time, he said that the Russian side "has gained the impression that the Western partners are treating the Bosnian Serbs in a biased manner."

The deputy minister said that one of the forthcoming meetings of the Contact Group will take place in Moscow, but noted that the date of the meeting, as well as its level have yet to be confirmed.

For more information please see Interfax Diplomatic Panorama of February 19, 1996.

Russia: Text of Yeltsin Edict on Troop Contingent for Bosnia

MM1602153996 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 4

[Russian Federation Presidential Edict No. 195 dated 14 February 1996 "On Sending a Contingent of Russian Federation Armed Forces To Participate in the Peacekeeping Operation of the Multinational Force for the Implementation of the General Framework Agreement on Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina," signed by President B. Yeltsin]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the basis of Resolution No. 7/2-1SF of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly dated 5 January 1996 "On the Use of a Contingent of Russian Federation Armed Forces in the Peacekeeping Operating of the Multinational Force for the Implementation of the General Framework Agreement on Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina," and also in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1031 of 15 December 1995, I decree:

1. A 1,600-strong contingent of Russian Federation Armed Forces (hereinafter referred to as the Russian troop contingent) together with appropriate military equipment, weapons, and property is to be sent to participate in the peacekeeping operation of the multinational force to implement the 14 December 1995 General Framework Agreement on Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereinafter referred to as the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina) for the period through 31 January 1997.

2. The Russian troop contingent is to be tasked with fulfilling basic tasks stemming from the General Framework Agreement on Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina of 14 December 1995 in its zone of responsibility (the northeastern part of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina).

The Russian troop contingent is to be subordinate to Colonel General L.P. Shevtsov (Russian Federation Armed Forces), deputy supreme commander [rukovoditel] of the forces to implement the peace agreement in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Russian Federation Ministry of Defense is to replace the personnel of the Russian troop contingent every six months.

3. The Russian Federation Government is to:

ensure, in accordance with the prescribed procedure, the financing of expenditure linked with the participation of the Russian troop contingent in the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia- Herzegovina, in rubles and foreign currency;

adopt within one week a decision on the conditions for the material provisioning of servicemen of the Russian troop contingent sent to Bosnia-Herzegovina, including additional guarantees and compensation, including for members of their family. [period as published]

Submit corresponding proposals on matters requiring a decision from the Russian Federation president.

4. This edict comes into force from the date it is signed.

Russia: Russian-Yugoslav Commission Discusses Cooperation

LD1702215896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1626 GMT 17 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Ivanov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Belgrade, 17 Feb — A working meeting of the co-chairmen of the inter-governmental Russian-Yugoslav mixed commission on economic cooperation, First Deputy Economics Minister Andrey Shapovalyants and FRY Trade Minister Djordje Siradovic, discussed Russian fuel deliveries to Yugoslavia and the construction of a Russia-Yugoslavia gas pipeline here today.

Shapovalyants told an ITAR-TASS correspondent that the meeting had examined "the cooperation in the oil and gas industry, the organization of cooperation in the agro-industrial complex and pharmacy. We also discussed ways to settle the former USSR's debts to Yugoslavia."

"The discussion also focused on the organization of the construction of the pipeline on Yugoslav territory and the formation of a new transport infrastructure that will connect Russia and the FRY when the international sanctions are abolished," he continued. In addition, Russia has put forward the proposal to resume the large-scale construction of industrial facilities in Yugoslavia and replace worn-out equipment at local power stations, Shapovalyants said.

The Yugoslav co-chairman of the commission, Siradovic, viewed as positive the talks held today and said the agreement had been reached on establishing a consortium to carry out the construction of the gas pipeline in the FRY. The consortium will be dominated by Yugoslav and Russian enterprises. In addition, it was stated that the agreement on long-term Russian oil deliveries to the FRY was virtually ready for signing, and the wish to conclude a similar document on cooperation in agriculture was expressed.

Russia: Yeltsin To Visit Ukraine as Previously Announced

LD1902115296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1102 GMT 19 Feb 96

[By Aleksandr Valiyev and Valeriy Sevryukov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 19 (Itar-Tass) — "Russian President Boris Yeltsin's official visit to Ukraine will take place as previously announced and the Russian Foreign Ministry is now making preparations for it," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov told journalists here today.

Expounding on this statement, Chairman of the Duma Committee for International Affairs Vladimir Lukin said he doubted that the Black Sea Fleet problem could influence the decision made by the Head of the Russian State.

"The Black Sea Fleet problem is difficult, but state visits are a constant practice and we should work in such a way as to safeguard friendship between Russia and Ukraine and to have the fleet, too," Lukin stressed.

Russia: Nikolayev Cited on Results of Trip to Baku

LD1802130896 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1100 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Andrey Nikolayev, director of the Russian Federal Border Service, visited Baku last week. Elchin Narimanov, our correspondent in Baku, reports.

[Narimanov] On the results of the talks held this week by Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev and Andrey Nikolayev, director of the Russian Federal Border Service, an agreement was initialled on cooperation between the border departments of the two countries. The agreement provides for setting up a coordination group consisting of five or six representatives of the two countries to regulate border issues. The Russian group will be stationed in Baku and the Azerbaijani group in Moscow.

After the signing ceremony, President Aliyev said that in the future this agreement will also be signed at the level of heads of state of the two countries. Heydar Aliyev said there are good prospects for developing cooperation, providing the interests of each country are observed.

In his turn, Andrey Nikolayev said that the work he was instructed by President Boris Yeltsin to carry out in the Transcaucasus has been fulfilled. Nikolayev said the main result of his trip was Geydar Aliyev's statement on the results of the talks and on the issue of Russian security.

Russia: Defense Ministry Says R35 Trillion Needed for START II

LD1902181096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1652 GMT 19 Feb 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 19 (Interfax) — Russia will need 35 trillion rubles in 1995 prices to implement the START-II strategic arms reduction treaty until the year 2003, a high-ranking representative of the Russian Defense Ministry told Interfax Monday.

The military official said he was in favor of Western countries providing financial aid to Russia for implementing the treaty. "Taking into consideration the difficult economic situation in the country, it will be difficult for Russia to carry out the START-II provisions on its own," the source said.

When debating the START-II ratification, the State Duma, Russian parliament's lower chamber, should take into account the prospects for the implementation of the ABM anti-ballistic missile treaty and possible NATO expansion eastward, the same source said. The military official said he favored the START-II treaty's ratification but "with certain stipulations" because of these unresolved problems between Russia and the United States.

The treaty could be ratified unconditionally if Washington confirms the inviolability of the ABM treaty and "takes into consideration Russian concerns about NATO enlargement," the same source said.

The military representative said that the START-II treaty maintained nuclear parity between Moscow and Washington as regards the number of warheads, decreased the nuclear threat in the world and ensured Russia's national security.

Russia: Radio Welcomes Suspension of Team Spirit-96 Exercise

SK1802030796 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in Korean 1200 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Commentary by Station Commentator (Valeriy Serikov) from the "Today's World" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] An official of the ROK Foreign Ministry has said that the ROK-U.S. annual joint military exercise, Team Spirit, which was to be held in March of this year, will not be held.

Station commentator (Valeriy Serikov) writes as follows regarding this matter:

This large-scale military exercise in which over 200,000 U.S. and ROK forces are mobilized, began in 1976. The exercise received a negative response from Pyongyang every year. The DPRK saw Team Spirit as war preparations supposedly directed against the DPRK. The DPRK also thought the exercises were an obstacle that interfered with coordinating its nuclear issue.

However, we can say that in the 1990s Team Spirit has lost the character of an annual military exercise. Team Spirit was not held in 1992, 1994, and 1995. Saying that this was to manifest to the whole world that they welcome positive progress in South-North relations, Washington and Seoul canceled Team Spirit on several occasions.

They say Team Spirit-96 will also be canceled. An ROK diplomat said that while taking into consideration the current security situation on the peninsula, they decided not to hold Team Spirit. Seoul and Washington also expressed satisfaction over the fact that the DPRK is clearly abiding by all the matters stipulated in the DPRK-U.S. agreed framework that was concluded in Geneva in October 1994. The DPRK and the United States must give up military exercises in accordance with the Geneva agreement. Nevertheless, the cancellation of Team Spirit-96 does not mean complete cancellation of ROK-U.S. combined military exercises. Also, the issue of the future of the 37,000 U.S. forces stationed in South Korea has not yet been resolved.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Invites Clinton to Moscow for Debate

LD1902145696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1353 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 19 (Interfax) — Leader of the Russian Liberal-Democratic Party and its parliamentary faction Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has invited U.S. president Bill Clinton to Moscow for live TV debates.

"You are a president, and I am a presidential candidate. I am sure we have things to discuss," says a letter from Zhirinovskiy to Clinton, circulated by the faction's press service in Moscow Monday.

"The 20th century is a time of drastic changes, and it will enter history as such. However, the future may have larger changes in store for both Russia and the United States. I think in that case we are both interested in having better relations between our countries. Anyway, our meeting and live TV debates will do good and serve for the benefit of our peoples," says the letter.

Russia: Ministry To Finish Building Cuban Nuclear Power Station

LD1902105096 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 0900 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Russia plans to finish the construction of a nuclear power station which was started 14 years ago in Cuba. Talks were held in Havana today between Cuban and Russian delegations, our radio station was told by Vladislav Petrov, press spokesman at the Russian Atomic Power Ministry.

[Begin unidentified speaker recording] The Americans think Russia should not be allowed to get involved in building nuclear power stations in Cuba, and that it poses a danger to them. However, they were given the chance to take part in the project and make it safe for their country, if they do think it's a danger. But they turned it down [brief break in transmission] as if it would be safe if we were not there. The station is about 90 percent complete and it just needs to be finished. It is not only Russia involved in continuing the work — there's talk of setting up some kind of international consortium and finishing the station to have a chance of ending Cuba's power shortages. [end recording]

[Announcer] According to Vladislav Petrov, it has not yet been decided what to do with the waste from the future nuclear power station. However, he is sure that whatever happens, radioactive waste will remain in Cuba.

Russia: DPRK Handling of Defection Case Likened to Nazi Propaganda

MK1702122196 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Ivan Shomov: "'A Living Corpse' Staged by Pyongyang. DPRK Authorities Charge ITAR-TASS Correspondent With 'Slander'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] After the much-publicized events in the Russian mission's compound in Pyongyang, the North Korean regime, on which foreign journalists have long bestowed many an unflattering nickname, such as "the Stalinist fortress of socialism" or "the Korean GULAG Archipelago," for harassing foreign journalists, may justifiably apply for nomination to the Guinness Book of World Records, let's say, in the category for "The Quickest Revival of Dead Bodies." Yesterday the DPRK authorities clearly demonstrated for the whole world to see miracles of propaganda art from the arsenal of Dr. Goebbels. On 15 February, when Grigoriy Karasin, official spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, told journalists at a briefing in Moscow that a DPRK citizen armed with a pistol, who had penetrated the Russian trade mission in Pyongyang the day before, committed a suicide, many people thought this was the end of the incident. The high-ranking Russian diplomat appeared to share this view. Otherwise he would not have stressed that "this incident — which is undoubtedly unpleasant — has not elicited any political concern from the Russian side." He clarified in the same breath, however, that Moscow has not yet received any reaction from the North Korean authorities to it.

Pyongyang's reaction followed the next day, and in the most unbelievable form at that. A North Korean Foreign Ministry official called "on the carpet" ITAR-TASS correspondent Ivan Zakharchenko — probably the sole foreign correspondent in the DPRK whose reports on the incident were cited by all world news agencies — and accused him of "slandering" and "instigating hostile forces to launch a smear campaign against the DPRK." A North Korean diplomat also told the journalist that the person who had caused the turmoil was alive and that he had committed these actions unwittingly "in a state of mental disorder." Also yesterday, a protest was lodged with the ITAR-TASS management in Moscow and a statement was made that "the defector did not seek political asylum at all" and that "such allegations are offensive to the Korean people." At the same time nothing was said about the defector's current whereabouts or his background. In short, was there a "boy" at all?

This unbelievable incident occurred on 14 February, that is, two days before the DPRK's most revered holiday — the birthday of Kim Jong-il, the new "great leader" of North Korea. The ITAR-TASS correspondent reported, citing several unnamed sources in the Russian mission, that the DPRK citizen (who was later identified as 25-year-old Cho Meng-gil, a sergeant of the local special service) penetrated into the trade mission's building after shooting dead three guards and wounding one and asked for political asylum. The next day, according to ITAR-TASS' initial version, the North Korean special services, who were allowed to enter the trade mission's compound, carried out an operation to disarm the intruder, during which he was shot dead. Later extra details were released, according to which the sergeant who attempted to defect was not shot, but killed himself "being unable to bear the psychological pressure."

After yesterday's North Korean demarches, Russian Counselor-Envoy Pavel Yakovlev, who had personal contacts with Cho Meng-gil, said that the defector really asked for political asylum in Russia and rejected the theory about his being mentally ill as "holding no water." Many observers attribute the whole episode with the "living corpse" played out by Pyongyang yesterday to the North Korean authorities' "domestic needs." For never in the DPRK's history has the leader's birthday been marred by such an incident. Moreover, how can it be explained to the people why this person decided to defect from "the freest and the most flourishing country in the world?" It is much easier to blame the goings-on on the defector's "mental disorder" and "outside enemies."

... At the end of World War II Doctor Goebbels used to instruct his propagandists: If enemy propaganda services, let's say, the British, report on bombardments of one German city or another or even a street, the people should be told that there is no such city or street in the Third Reich.

Russia: Envoy Protests Yeltsin Remarks on Iranian Role in Chechnya

LD1702115296 Tehran IRNA in English 1120 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 17, IRNA — Iran's ambassador to Moscow, Mehdi Safari in a meeting with the Russian Foreign Ministry officials on Friday [16 February], protested to the remarks concerning Iran made recently by Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

The Russian Foreign Ministry officials expressing astonishment over the remarks said that neither security institutions nor the Foreign Ministry has provided President Yeltsin with such information.

President Yeltsin on Friday while visiting the steel mill plant in Chelyabinsk once more claimed that Chechen militants are trained and equipped with guns and ammunition in Iran, Turkey and Pakistan for fighting in Chechnya.

Yeltsin in mid-January had also accused Iran of having links with Chechen separatists, the charge was strongly denied by Iran at the time.

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Addresses Congress for Small Businesses

LD2002120896 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0700 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Speech by Russian President Boris Yeltsin at the All-Russian Congress of Representatives of Small Businesses in the Kremlin — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed delegates, esteemed guests: I congratulate you and everyone working in Russia's small businesses on the start of the first Russia-wide congress of representatives of small businesses. This is the first time that such a representative forum has been assembled in our country. There are delegates here from virtually every region of Russia, every sector of the economy, and every kind of small business.

The congress is taking place at a crucial time. We are into the fifth year of reform. The reform comes at a very great price and demands immense effort, strength, determination, and initiative of everyone. The experience which we are acquiring in such harsh conditions is the better for that.

I believe that everyone in this hall will agree that something is already working. Market relations have taken root in Russian soil and are developing dynamically. I was convinced of that once again during my recent trip to the Urals. In four months' time there will be elections for the president of the Russian Federation, an election upon which, with no exaggeration, the fate of the country will depend.

I am sure that the revival of the country and its economy and a rise in people's prosperity are possible only by strengthening the market and democracy. Halting the reforms, trying to turn things back, would be a crushing blow to the country from which it might not recover. I hope that you Russian businessmen understand and are aware that it is your fate, too, that will be decided in June.

The first years of reform have been very difficult for you. You have stood fast, however, and the further we move forward along the road of the market, the clearer it becomes that small businesses are one of the buttresses of the economy, of citizens' prosperity, of social and political stability in society, and, to a considerable extent, of society's moral revival.

Through developing small businesses we should be able to compensate as quickly as possible for the social costs of the initial phase of reform and create a stable class of efficient property owners. In developed countries more than half of the workforce is engaged in small business and the services sector. A considerable proportion of the nation's wealth is created by small businesses. Quite a lot has been achieved in Russia over an extremely short period of time. There are now more than 900,000 small businesses. Your work is almost three times more efficient than that of other sectors of the economy. Russians are forgetting the words shortage and graft, and small businesses are playing an indisputable role in this by producing foodstuffs and other essential goods and services worth tens and tens of trillions of rubles.

Small businesses have created hundreds of thousands of extra jobs, cutting unemployment. Millions of people are already employed in small businesses and creating prosperity for themselves, their families, and other people. Bringing young and middle-aged people, particularly women, and former servicemen into this sector will have a positive influence on society and the criminal situation in society. Small businesses provide an education in enterprise, the work ethic, and respect for property. They represent a return to and development of the business traditions of which the Russian people once had such a wealth.

In short, small businesses mean the creation of a powerful middle class, without which there can be no stability in today's society. Small businesses mean the creation of a new and progressive economic group and of a healthy competitive environment. In many towns small businesses are a solid base for steady tax revenue for the budget. In Moscow, St. Petersburg, Chelyabinsk, Nizhniy Novgorod, and a number of other towns they supply almost half of all tax revenues. And that is under the present, less than favorable, conditions, of course.

It is our common task to improve these conditions substantially, using the potential of the state. The state can and does have a duty to reinforce its support and legal protection for small businesses. It can and does have a duty to follow a specific, comprehensive protectionist policy in the interests of national enterprise.

First of all, we plan to stimulate the growth of small businesses in industry and construction in chronically depressed regions and areas where people leaving these regions are resettling.

The law on state support for small businesses is aimed at that, as is the federal government program, building on this law. I know that this law has not met with your wholehearted approval and that you insist that certain changes and amendments should be introduced into it. However, I think that the main thing is that the idea of improving the tax situation of small businesses should be accepted at all levels of management as something axiomatic. This idea is to be found in the bill and it should be passed as soon as possible.

The law on a simplified taxation system, accounting, and accountability for small businesses has been in force since December 1995. The point is to draft the legal instruments ensuring its implementation as soon as possible.

A special government body has been set up — it is the Russian Federation's state committee for support and development of small businesses.

Such committees have also been set up in some other towns. Their task is to defend your interests actively and to demand specific action to support small businesses from the federal authorities and from the administrative bodies of the constituent parts of the Russian Federation.

Let me emphasize that support for Russian small businesses represents a long-term policy of ours. As candidate for a second presidential term in office, I guarantee that if I am elected, the main elements of state policy toward small businesses will without fail be put into practice. Tax concessions, information support, cadre training, and coordination of activities in this area between the federal authorities, constituent parts of the Russian Federation, and the local authorities are among these elements.

I am well aware that small businesses continue to face serious difficulties. They are encountered right at the beginning, during the registration stage, during the search for premises and first credits, when paying for the lease, during contacts with the tax services, and so on, and so forth.

Small businesses also encounter quite a few difficulties in their work. Let me here single out the incomplete legislative base, the tough tax squeeze, and the extraordinarily complex taxation system. Unfortunately, the tax code has been stuck in the State Duma at the draft stage for several months.

There is insufficient start-up capital, insufficient working capital, there is the pressure from the criminal structures, there is a shortage of accountancy, managerial, consulting, and other qualified personnel. The absence of social and personal protection both for the owners and those employed in private enterprises also gives rise to much alarm.

The prospects for Russian small businesses depend directly on the resolution of the problems listed above. It is necessary for the government to ensure that tax and other concessions for small businesses are retained and expanded. It is even more important to make use of them to support small businesses which produce goods and to help them to be more active investors and innovators. I think that this kind of policy must without fail be enshrined in the Russian Federation's new tax code and the draft document does make provisions for this.

Protection of intellectual property, credit support, state orders, risk insurance and other measures must, Oleg Nikolayevich, be ensured for those busy in the field of innovation, those who are introducing state-of-the-art technological processes. Oleg Nikolayevich is Soskovets, first deputy chairman of the Russian Federation Government. [applause]

They will not all manage to be admitted into your office, so let them at least have a look so that they know who is going to be responsible for this issue. [indicates Soskovets, to more applause]

It is time to investigate the idle production capacities, for we have many of them in our country. Incidentally, we currently intend, and Oleg Nikolayevich is very well aware of this, we intend to curtail the capacity of our defense enterprises to gear their output to mobilization needs. After all, the threat of war has now receded considerably in our country and there is no direct threat of war, nor are strategic missiles targeted directly onto our territory, just as the territory of the United States and other countries are not from our territory. So, production capacities which can gear their output to mobilization needs must be curtailed.

In connection with this, there emerge free and ready-to-use capacities which small businesses can make use of. Naturally, small businesses placing orders at these capacities should be granted concessions. Another option is to encourage the creation of small businesses underpinned by these emerging capacities.

Local authorities in the constituent parts of the Russian Federation, regional and local bodies of state support for small businesses must play a more effective and constructive role.

Today, many regions are being granted some kind of financial support from the federal budget. I think it will be fair to link this support with how the subsidized regions are trying to help themselves. In other words, the more active support there is for small businesses, the more investments are encouraged and new jobs are created, the more help they will get at federal level. Only help of this sort will yield real results, primarily because it will not only help them to survive, but also to develop. Returns will not be slow to come where small businesses are paid due attention and the most favorable conditions are created for them. This rule has been confirmed at all times everywhere. I am confident that Russia will not be the exception.

Esteemed participants in the congress, a number of documents have been drafted by you and the organizational committee, which are of both economic and great social and political importance. First of all, I mean the main directions for developing Russia's small businesses. Effectively, this means your program of activities to the year 2000. You have published a book entitled "Small Businesses in Russia." Unfortunately, I received it only yesterday and last night I only had time to look and leaf through. I did not have time to read it. I did notice that it contained profound analysis, knowledge of the subject, and good recommendations. I am sure that this and other documents should be discussed in detail. If the congress submits these documents to the top authorities and administrative bodies, I can assure you that both the president and the government will pay the necessary attention to them.

We expect that as Russian enterprise, primarily small business, grows stronger, the destiny of the reforms and therefore the country's future will increasingly pass into the hands of people of high initiative and responsibility, business people, true patriots of their homeland. I am confident that small businesses, backed by Russia's wealth of tradition, supported by and working with the state, will revive Russia. I wish the congress success. May luck be with you in your endeavors on behalf of the prosperity of our fatherland. Thank you.

Russia: Yeltsin Addresses Meeting in Chelyabinsk

LD1602233396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2321 GMT 16 Feb 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature: no 32]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Boris Yeltsin spent the third and last day of a current visit to the Urals in Chelyabinsk. "I like people's sentiments. In spite of the difficulties, they've understood the meaning of the reforms and are ready to put them into practice," he said answering a question by INTERFAX special correspondent Boris Grishchenko.

Addressing a meeting at a tube-rolling factory in Chelyabinsk, Yeltsin said he had decided to run for re-election as president because he wanted "to carry the reforms to completion."

A "fairly dangerous" set of people are going to contest the presidency in June, some of them ready to "hit the reforms on the head," he said. "With the election producing a certain kind of results the reforms may go haywire. A second 1917 may set in. Who wants it? After an ordeal like that Russia won't get back to its feet again."

"The reform is going ahead, and such economic sectors as the metal, petroleum, petroleum and gas, timber and other industries are on the rise. The decline is now a thing of the past," the president continued.

Investment into industry is the main condition for the success of the current stage of reform, he argued.

Dwelling on one of Russia's most burning problems, he said once again that funds to pay overdue wages, pensions, social security allowances and student grants had been found and all such arrears would begin to be paid in March. He said in this connection that several ministers and heads of local administration had been dismissed for failing to carry out laws and presidential decrees.

This year "wages will gradually be going up and prices going down," Yeltsin promised. But "the overall standard of living in Russia unfortunately did not go up either in 1994 or in 1995," he conceded.

Filling Russia's domestic market with goods was not an easy job, he went on. "Think of the lines in the stores, of the scuffles in the lines, think of the kilometer-long vodka lines," he said.

He said he was against proposals to raise alcohol prices as a means to increase state incomes. "I believe that is incorrect. We should find other sources (of income) so as not to give people worries," he said.

He reiterated his earlier promise to have special bonds issued to compensate those who have lost money they put into firms accused of illicit dealings. He said he would sign a decree to that effect in a week.

He also promised tighter control of banks and debarring "mafiosi and crooks" from them. He commended the Stolichnyy bank, which has a branch in Chelyabinsk, as a reliable one.

Answering questions, Yeltsin assured the meeting he would help the tube-rolling factory to pay its workers allowances for their children and promised assistance in funding the construction of a factory in the city to manufacture baby food from ecological ingredients.

Going over to the Chechen conflict, the president said he had spent "many sleepless nights" looking for ways to end the crisis. He said his view was that the conflict should be settled by "the gradual withdrawal of federal troops." He was "sparing no effort" to work out a nonviolent end to the "lengthy business which is unpleasant for everyone."

"Russia must be integrated and indivisible," he said. "If the troops are immediately withdrawn from there, (Chechen separatist) fighters will seize Dagestan, Karachai-Circassia and other (Russian Federation) republics. That will be an instance of international terrorism and banditry." Russian authorities must "catch (separatist leader Dzhokhar) Dudayev, who is being guarded by members of his clan and who constantly changes even the place where he spends the night."

"The borders of Chechnya are closed off" and "we are not letting fighters and vehicles with weapons penetrate into Chechnya via Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran or Pakistan... Earlier on we weren't strong enough to do that but now no fighter will either go in or come out of there."

The meeting passed a resolution which, on behalf of the factory's personnel of 10,000, expressed support for Yeltsin's candidature for re-election.

A declaration of support also came from Ural businessmen whom he met in Chelyabinsk the same day.

A nearly one-hour-long speech he made in a local business club mainly focused on the principal areas of a third stage of Russia's economic reform.

Yeltsin said he had instructed Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zaveryukha to draft a presidential decree on land. He said a draft law on land had been submitted to the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, but "this draft law is among 500 drafts which the State Duma still can't get round to considering. But those laws are essential now. I will act by issuing decrees which will be in force until the law comes out."

And the lower house ought to "do more work and less political blather" as well.

The president said reforming Russia's banking system was an essential element of the third stage of reform and promised to help create a legal base for a banking reform. "The bank rate is little by little going down," and that is a positive factor, he said. He suggested that the number of banks be cut down — Russia does not need "4,500" banks, and the banking system still has "quite a few light-fingered businessmen" too.

He also said small- and medium-scale business needed support and there was a plan to reduce taxes for those categories of business. He deplored that the Duma "still hasn't managed to pass a tax code."

He cautioned that a victory by one of his presidential election rivals meant an end to reforms. "It's even difficult to imagine what would happen if somebody else is elected president. Then all the elements of the reform would be reversed. That must not be allowed to happen. It is my belief that Russian business will say its weighty word during the presidential election," Yeltsin said.

He said his re-election would make it possible to steeply increase the inflow of foreign capital into the Russian economy.

Speaking about the current election campaign, he said he knew of instances where special firms were set up to collect signatures from supports of some of the candidates. He said he was sure he could easily gather one million signatures, a minimum one needs to be registered as a candidate. "Moscow will give many signatures and so will other regions," he said.

"I trust you and hope for your support," Yeltsin said in conclusion.

"The electoral struggle will be serious, but the decision is made and, having stated it, I feel relieved," he told INTERFAX after meeting the businessmen.

Russia: Yeltsin: Currency Reserves Total $13 Billion

LD1602142196 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1133 GMT 16 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Yevgeniy Tkachenko and Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Chelyabinsk, 16 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — [passage omitted] Speaking [at a meeting with businessmen] about the country's reserves, Boris Yeltsin stressed that although we received no strategic reserves from the USSR, we have now managed to accumulate a considerable amount of money and gold. The country's foreign currency reserves at present amount to $13 billion, the president stated.

Russia: Yeltsin Releases Chubays From IMF, IBRD Duties

LD2002092596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0830 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 20 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has released Anatoliy Chubays from his duties as the Russian Federation's representative at the IMF, the IBRD [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development], and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

According to the head of state's press service today, the president has appointed Sergey Dubinin, finance minister, to be the Russian Federation's representative at the IMF and the IBRD.

Vladimir Kadannikov, first deputy prime minister, has been appointed the Russian Federation's representative at the IBRD and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

Russia: Yeltsin's Health 'Alright'; Speaks on Election, Chechnya

*LD1602191296 Moscow NTV in Russian
1600 GMT 16 Feb 96*

[Video report by correspondent Alim Ysupov on Russian President Yeltsin's visit to Chelyabinsk; from the "Segodnya" newscast; passages within quotation marks are recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ysupov] Today's appearances in Chelyabinsk by President Yeltsin may be considered to be the beginning of the official preelection campaign after the final statement by Boris Yeltsin yesterday that he was entering the preelection race. In all, Boris Yeltsin appeared in six places in Chelyabinsk today. The president met the leaders of the region, the heads of enterprises, and had very many impromptu meetings with the inhabitants of the town. Yeltsin spoke with people practically everywhere he stopped. Yeltsin told the electorate that he was ready to stand as president again.

[Unidentified woman speaker] "The workers are for you. We are for you." [words indistinct]

[Yeltsin] "I've got the right character. My health is alright now. It's good. So...

[Unidentified man, interrupting] "We are pinning our hopes on you."

[Ysupov] Speaking of his desire to stand again for the highest state post, Boris Yeltsin said this was out of a sense of responsibility for the fate of reforms and, in the opinion of Yeltsin, many of the other candidates do not fully appreciate the degree of that responsibility. Yeltsin said that the president's job is a difficult one.

[Yeltsin] "It's damnable work! If the situation wasn't as it is, if I didn't simply want to see the reforms through to the end, I wouldn't stand again for anything."

[Ysupov] Yeltsin's Chelyabinsk visit was arranged in the best traditions of a preelection show. Yeltsin had meetings with people in the streets, met unemployed at the job training center, visited the local Duma, and even looked in at a grocer's shop in the town. However, he gave his most important address to the workers of the Chelyabinsk pipe-rolling factory where he formulated his pre-electoral campaign point-by-point without even looking at a piece of paper.

[Yeltsin] "My resolve is firm. I have removed several ministers now for simply not implementing decrees. I have removed several heads of administrations for not implementing decrees and laws. And we will continue to act in this way until there is discipline and order. Just as in metallurgy, any imprecision can lead to an accident, so it's the same with us — any mistake and there's an accident."

[Ysupov] Yeltsin promised that this year there will be complete economic and financial stability. A decree on assistance for investors who were duped will be signed during next week. Particular heed will be given to social programs. Things will be completely in order beginning from March as far as paying wages is concerned.

[Yeltsin] "I am saying that with a clear conscience and soul, I could say July, or after the elections, instead of March. But no, I'm saying in March so that the electorate knows how a presidential candidate behaves."

[Ysupov] Yeltsin spoke in particular detail about Chechnya. The conflict, in his view, may be settled in the next three or four months, before the elections. The president said that the main problem with the settlement was connected with the fact that it was very difficult to hold talks with Dudayev's men.

[Yeltsin] "It is very, very difficult to reach agreement with them. It is practically impossible. Therefore, they must be taken by other means, do you see? Force [must] be used to make them disarm, to begin to lead peaceful lives. And we will help them."

[Ysupov] Yeltsin did not reveal details of the Chechen peace settlement. He formulated once again the dilemma surrounding the withdrawal of troops.

[Yeltsin] "They will cut each other to pieces as soon as the army leaves. But it cannot be left there either. Therefore, we want to withdraw the army gradually to the edge of the border of Chechnya and, in any event, should they get up to their monkey tricks again, we will seize them again."

[Ysupov] The workers reaction to the president's energetic address was rather restrained. However, they unanimously adopted a resolution to support Yeltsin's candidacy in the elections. The plant director availed himself of the opportunity to ask the president to exempt the factory from tax on profits and on VAT. Yeltsin promised to think about it.

It is thought that Chelyabinsk region was chosen as the first testing ground for Boris Yeltsin's preelection ideas since the president has always enjoyed substantial support here. However, soon he will have to put to the test the strength of his convictions in other regions, too. And they are saying that Yeltsin will now make such trips at least once a month. [video shows Yeltsin meeting public in Chelyabinsk, man at side taking his arm when he gets out of car, laying wreathe at memorial, Yeltsin shown addressing plant workers]

Russia: Kohl's 'Tactful' Treatment of Yeltsin Noted

MM1902165396 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 20 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[Article by Boris Vinogradov: "Helmut Kohl Endeavored Not To Wound Boris Yeltsin's Pride"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Helmut Kohl is the first leader of the G-7 to rush to Moscow right after Boris Yeltsin announced his decision to run for a second presidential term.

It is emphasized at all levels in Moscow and Bonn that this visit must demonstrate support for Boris Yeltsin's election campaign, as well as confidence that he alone will be able to lead the country safely through "disturbance and upheavals," as the Russian president promised in Yekaterinburg recently. Outwardly everything has appeared just like this. The two leaders met in the Kremlin as true friends and did not conceal their liking for each other. The relaxed fireside tete-a-tete discussion in the Senate Room resembled, rather, an exchange of pleasantries, which did not, however, conceal Kohl's concern at the situation in Russia and, in particular, at the state of affairs in Chechnya.

Everyone knows that recently the chancellor has been subjected to unremitting criticism at home for "excessive tactfulness" toward official Moscow, which is waging war in the North Caucasus. The "greens," the third largest party in the Bundestag, have already declared that they will not support Kohl in the upcoming elections unless he changes his stance on the "Chechen question." The chancellor is also unable to read anything good about himself in the German press when it addresses the subject of Russian-German relations.

Klaus Kinkel, FRG minister of foreign affairs, had prepared the ground for the visit to Moscow a couple of weeks ago. On meeting with the Russian leadership he ran over all the points of the planned talks and brought back to Bonn with him prescriptions with regard to how the chancellor must behave in Moscow. In response to attacks by newspapers and parliamentarians Kinkel said that Germany was geared not to "personalities" in its relations with Russia but to the "course," meaning the course of democratic reforms. At the same time he did not maintain that the FRG associates its plans for the future in relations with Russia precisely with Yeltsin.

The situation is similar to the one that was taking place between the two countries on the eve of Mikhail Gorbachev's departure from the political scene. Then, too, there were embraces and kisses, although everyone in Bonn realized that they would soon have to part with "friend Mikhail." This time Helmut Kohl, who is known for his sentimentality, also endeavored not to trample on Boris Yeltsin's pride, when reckoning up his chances of winning the election in June.

He refused in advance to meet with Zyuganov, Yavlinskiy, and the leaders of other parties in opposition to the president, obviously believing that this opportunity will still present itself: There is a time for everything. In this connection people in Germany merely emphasize that they would like greater stability not only in Russia but in bilateral contacts, recalling with nostalgia the "regular and predictable relations" with the Soviet leadership in the times of Gorbachev. Nevertheless, Helmut Kohl said in Moscow that the Germans "remember the good things" and rate highly the contribution of Boris Yeltsin, who accelerated the Russian troop withdrawal from Germany at the "chancellor's personal request."

The troops that pulled out of Germany are now fighting in Chechnya and keeping a peacemaking watch in zones of conflicts on CIS territory. Russia is watching with alarm as NATO approaches its borders. Will Yeltsin be able to persuade the chancellor that the former accord on the "nonexpansion of NATO to the east beyond the line of the Elbe River," when Germany was uniting with Moscow's permission, remains in force to this day?

The previous day Helmut Kohl declared that he was interested in the development of good partnership relations with Russia and Ukraine and would take account of the "correctly understood interests" of their security. He did, however, describe as "perfectly legitimate" East Europe's desire to join the North Atlantic bloc. Kohl particularly emphasized that he would regard it as damaging if the question of NATO expansion were used for political purposes on the eve of the presidential election in Russia. In Kohl's opinion, the option of "NATO's special relationship with Russia," as the nucleus of European security, merits attention but needs more thorough elaboration.

At the same time the chancellor well understands that Boris Yeltsin cannot avoid using the "NATO card" in the preelection race and that he will repeatedly bang his fist on the table, rejecting the accusations by "Russia's patriots" of paying insufficient attention to the state's national interests. At any rate, Yeltsin ambivalently declared in conversation with Kohl that practical actions with NATO's "Drang nach Osten" (push to the east) program can not only do serious harm to bilateral relations but will also mark a return to confrontation and relapses into the "Cold War."

Russia: Yeltsin's Campaign Off to Promising Start

MK1702091396 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Marina Shakina under the "16 June" rubric: "Boris Yeltsin Launches an Offensive. The Urals Start of the President's Electoral Campaign Can Be Recognized as Fairly Successful"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Few people thought that Boris Yeltsin would undertake a trip to his home town accompanied by his entourage, a host of journalists trailing behind, in order to announce his refusal to contest the upcoming presidential elections. So while technically the event of the week was Yeltsin's "Yes" made public in the Urals, essentially it is the trip itself that turned out to be the main news, as it allowed us a glimpse of the political image the president is trying on in the run-up to 16 June, and also his electoral tactics and strategy. [passage omitted]

Strictly speaking, it should be acknowledged that the president's election campaign is proceeding in typical Yeltsin fashion. Yeltsin has always been able to pull himself together and concentrate his energy in extreme, critical situations and has been bored by government routine. Never before over the past few years has Yeltsin been so much like himself vintage 1991 as he was in Yekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk — bringing to mind the times of the first presidential elections, when he would take a pen out of his pocket and sign an agreement right in front of a miners' rally.

The tone he chose for his election campaign sharply contrasts with that of Zyuganov's: Yeltsin is pointedly above parties, he deliberately distances himself from any ideological schools of thought, projecting the image of the leader of the whole nation. For this reason the schedule of his foreign policy activity over the next few months is also very revealing: visits to China and Ukraine in spring; the arrival of Polish President Kwasniewski to Moscow in late February; and a meeting of the "Group of Eight" on nuclear security problems in Moscow in late April (the climax!).

Furthermore, Yeltsin avoids wringing his hands or tearing his hair in his assessment of the past — never, except on a few occasions, did he engage in making revisions, but only removed those "who were not up to the task" and who irritated public opinion. Having rapped Chubays for his lapses, he bestowed his favor on him again — "Chubays remains in the presidential team" — and even hinted at the possibility of his returning to the government, emphasizing that the former first deputy prime minister is untainted by corruption.

The crux of the presidential message addressed to the people can be summed up as follows: If after taking two steps forward we need to take a step back (or sideways), you had better take it with me than with anyone else.

Russia: Politicians React to Yeltsin's Decision To Run

MK1702120296 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Maksim Zhukov and Yevgeniy Yuryev: "A Revealed 'Open Secret' as an Extra Cause for Speculation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The reaction to Boris Yeltsin's much-awaited decision to run for a second term was not difficult to predict. Responding to a request to comment on the announcement, opposition representatives repeated what they had said about the president earlier, but in a more ironic tone. Pro-government and moderate politicians generally chose to avoid any comment.

Viktor Chernomyrdin was one of the first to comment on this account. He announced his active support for the president's decision, noting that "a difficult and thorny path" lies ahead for the head of state and that much work will have to be done to cover it. According to the premier, he "hoped that Yeltsin would seek reelection for a second term and is confident of his victory in the upcoming elections." "I am sure of it!" the premier stressed again. Some government members, heads of administration, and NDR [Russia Is Our Home] parliament faction leader Sergey Belyayev agreed with him.

Nikolay Ryabov also immediately reacted to Yeltsin's decision. On Thursday [15 February] the chief of the Central Electoral Committee observed cautiously that the incumbent president has the right not to leave his chair during the [election] campaign, but that on no account "may he use the advantages of his position." Communist [Duma] Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev, hinting that parliamentarians intend to monitor the elections and the election campaign (next week the Duma will discuss a bill which is to broaden the powers of public observers), said that "the state machine will not be working for our candidate." These words by Seleznev are not news. Neither is the prediction that Ryabov, who brought up the subject of "using an official position for personal objectives," will not go beyond that statement. The law on presidential elections does not allow for preelection agitation to be conducted by trading on one's official position. There may be no preelection actions on behalf of the power structure a candidate represents. Yet it is not going to be easy to catch in the act a candidate "trading on his official position." Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin, for example, conducted his election campaign quite successfully without taking a leave of absence. To all appearances, Boris Yeltsin will not even have to reject such rebukes. There are plenty as it is already.

For instance, yesterday Gennadiy Zyuganov told a press conference that "Yeltsin is acting as a benefactor handing out gifts from a big bag. But this bag is our common, holey budget." Generally, the Communist leader considers the incumbent president a rather vulnerable rival, but he "accepts his challenge." Another well-known Communist, Vladimir Semago, thus commented on Yeltsin's decision: "The president has taken on a difficult and unduly arduous physical test." According to him, Yeltsin's decision to run spreads confusion in the reasonable electoral lineup that had come about: Zhirinovskiy, a certain candidate from the democratic forces, Yavlinskiy, and a candidate from the leftist-patriotic forces. Yavlinskiy's comment stands apart from the others. Without going into details, he said: "After what has happened with our country, Russia will never elect either Yeltsin or Zyuganov." Your KOMMERSANT-DAILY correspondent had to content himself with a banal "No comment" from Sergey Shakhray, Pavel Bunich, and Ivan Rybkin.

The domestic market has hardly reacted to Yeltsin's decision. Russian entrepreneurs see this move as purely formal. In the West, however, many analysts are trying to come to terms with the idea of cooperation with the Communists. Of course, all the incumbent rulers of Russia are former Communists, says Paul Luke, head of the Deutsche Morgan Grenfell investment strategy center. Even so, the advent of the Zyuganovites will still be a step back. Meanwhile, Liam Halligan of the Russia-Europe Center for Economic Policy counts on the pragmatism of the "new leftists:" "The Communists don't want to transfer assets from the private sector back to the public sector. They simply want to get their share of the pie."

Russia: Yeltsin's Aides Assailed Over Campaign Blunders

LD1802215796 Moscow NTV in Russian
1800 GMT 18 Feb 96

[From the "Itogi" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Announcer Yevgeniy Kiselev] Can any advice help the head of state if, after Boris Yeltsin's electoral campaign was launched, one gets the impression that the main danger for the president is the advice of his comrades-in-arms whom Vyacheslav Kostikov aptly called political retainers.

The first and possibly the main error by the Kremlin at the very start of Yeltsin's pre-electoral campaign is what happened in Chechnya. Just three days after Boris Yeltsin announced he was going to run in the elections, going to run under the slogan of restoring peace in Chechnya, 20 Russian soldiers died there and 36 men of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry for Civil Defense, Emergencies, and Natural Disasters went missing in action. If one proceeds from preelection logic, after Yeltsin's nomination, the power-wielding structures should have foreseen that Dudayev's men would try to undermine the situation and they should have done everything to ensure that bloodshed did not resume in Chechnya in the first few days after that at least. However, they did not do that.

The economic offensive by General Kulikov, whose ideas turned out to be strikingly in keeping with the slogans of Boris Yeltsin's main rival, Gennadiy Zyuganov, also seriously hurt the [president's] power. As a result, the business world of Russia and the Western creditors were thrown into a state of shock on the eve of the president entering the preelection campaign.

And now let's remember how Boris Yeltsin began his preelection speech in Yekaterinburg on 15 February.

[Begin Yeltsin recording, sounding hoarse, coughing] Esteemed fellow countrymen! I've been talking to people out in the streets all day so my voice has gone a bit. [end recording]

[Kiselev] How could the people responsible for the president's schedule in Yekaterinburg, what right did they have to allow the head of state, on the eve of one of his most public addresses in his entire political biography, to lose his voice? The numerous aides, advisers, and guards should have done everything to ensure that Yeltsin appeared before millions of Russians on that day in tip-top physical condition. They should not have allowed anyone to have a shadow of a doubt about the state of the president's health. Otherwise, that entire entourage is simply professionally unfit.

The president also lost quite a few votes in connection with the dismissal of Oleg Poptsov. What is at issue is not even the personal fate of the now former chairman of Russia TV. Our colleagues regard the words lies, gloom and doom, petty affairs, as harsh, unwarranted insults. Russia TV journalists have been traditionally Yeltsin's truest and most devoted supporters. Will they again stand shoulder to shoulder with the president should anything happen, God forbid, the way they did on the night of 3-4 October 1993?

And what about us, NTV? We have always been loyal to our president. Nevertheless, for a long time we have not been able to shake off the feeling that we, as they said in those days, are members of a family of enemies of the people.

We were reminded of that again at the beginning of the week, when we were refused Kremlin accreditation twice. Incidentally, after we naturally made a fuss about that, Kremlin bureaucrats disowned everything and blamed it all on the usual scapegoats.

By a strange coincidence, at the height of that scandal, one of our well-wishers dispatched a bulldozer to the NTV ice sculpture, dispelling once and for all any doubts about the intellectual capabilities of those who are responsible for relations between power and the press.

And once again, all that is left for us to do is to spread our hands and to say for the umpteenth time, without any particular hope of being heard: Esteemed Boris Nikolayevich, with aides like that, you honestly don't need any enemies!

That is all. Goodbye. Until next Sunday. [video shows Kiselev in studio, video clips of Chechen fighting, Poptsov, ice-sculpture, exterior of Kremlin, Kulikov news conference, Yeltsin addressing audience]

Russia: Zyuganov Said Planning U.S. Trip To Allay Western Fears

LD1802220296 Moscow NTV in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Feb 96

[From the "Itogi" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Yevgeniy Kiselev] Against the background of the continuing disorder and vacillation in the ranks of the democrats, the communists and other representatives of groups and groupings of the left-wing and left-nationalist opposition demonstrated an evident ability to consolidate this week. And not just that. They once again demonstrated their organizational skills. Literally at the very minute when in Yekaterinburg Boris Yeltsin announced he was going to stand, in Moscow the Communist Party of the Russian Federation congress endorsed Gennadiy Zyuganov as its presidential candidate. I can confirm that the announcement of the two events came into news agency computer systems at the very same minute.

There is synchronicity in something else, too. According to our information, while Boris Yeltsin is holding talks with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Gennadiy Zyuganov may in the next few days find himself in the United States, where meetings are to be organized for him with representatives of the American political elite, academics and specialists on Russia, leading journalists, mass media bosses, and major industrialists and financiers. During the visit, Zyuganov may make a number of public addresses to influential audiences in a number of public organizations and in prestigious research centers — the so-called brains trusts, which play an important role in the formation of U.S. foreign policy in regard to Russia. The main aim of this visit is to make Zyuganov publicly acceptable to all possible circles of Western politicians and the Western public.

Zyuganov's visit may be postponed, but preparations for it are going ahead, and the Communist leader's headquarters has received invitations from other leading Western countries, too. While backing Boris Yeltsin, the West is nevertheless thinking of what could happen if Yeltsin does not get in, and is getting ready to hold a dialogue with other possible candidates for the presidential post.

Russia: CPRF Instructions for Zyuganov Published

MM2002113596 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 2

["CPRF Instructions to Russian Federation Presidential Candidate Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov" — SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA headline]

[FBIS Translated Text] Supporting G.A. Zyuganov's nomination as presidential candidate representing Russia's popular patriotic forces, the Fourth All-Russia Conference of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] gives him the following instructions:

In agreement with all the political and social forces united in the popular patriotic bloc supporting a single Russian Federation presidential candidate — to publish the personnel makeup of the future government of national confidence which will be responsible for implementing the program of getting the country out of its political and economic crisis.

Following victory at the election, the president and the government of national confidence, utilizing their powers, shall implement the following measures:

In the economic and social spheres:

— immediately implementing practical steps to prevent the illegal ransacking of state property under the guise of privatization, while recognizing the mixed nature of the economy. Profoundly analyzing the results of the privatization carried out in the country and restoring justice in those areas where breaches of adopted laws have been committed;

submitting to the people within a short period of time a program for getting the country out of the economic crisis and restoring social stability, as well as the main avenues for the state's new economic policy;

phasing in a state monopoly on foreign trade in strategic raw materials and other materials;

restoring state ownership of the power generation and transport systems and the defense and other basic sectors of the national economy providing backup for the security system and ensuring Russia's stable development;

bringing pensions, benefits, grants, and wages into line with the real subsistence minimum on the basis of their regular indexation;

ensuring free and complete secondary and higher vocational education, state support for vocational and higher educational institutions, accessibility to them for all sections of the population, and equal initial opportunities for all young people;

reviving the state network of free medical services for the population, including preventive-health and convalescent institutions;

restoring and ensuring citizens' rights to work and leisure;

restoring citizens' savings at savings banks and guaranteeing state protection for the population's deposits from speculative operations by banking structures;

enshrining in law that land is public property, with no right to be bought, sold, or mortgaged, save in the case of dachas, truck gardens, and homestead plots, granting to corporate bodies and individuals wishing to work the land the right to long-term leases of agricultural land;

determining measures for ensuring the country's food security on the basis of the priority development of the agro-industrial complex and the revival of the Russian countryside; halting the destruction of the countryside, primarily as regards its social and transportation provision.

In the sphere of the protection of human rights, personal security, and the spiritual development of citizens:

enhancing the responsibility of all state structures for safeguarding individual and citizens' rights provided by legislation;

protecting the personal rights of Russian citizens, ensuring support by constitutional organs for the protection of human rights;

ensuring the adoption and unswerving observance of laws aimed at combating corruption, organized crime, and banditry;

ensuring citizens' right to obtain accurate information, while stepping up the mass media's liability for the dissemination of knowingly false information;

using legal methods to put a stop to propaganda in the mass media, book publishing and cinematography that encourages a cult of greed, violence, depravity, and egoism;

comprehensively protecting the traditions of Russian culture and education from being subordinated to the standards of Western civilization; promoting in every possible way the development of the national cultures of the peoples inhabiting the Russian Federation.

In the sphere of state building:

drawing up, nationally discussing, and adopting amendments to the Russian Federation Constitution, ensuring that representative organs of power exercise control over the executive;

establishing people's control over the preservation of the country's national assets and the activities of the state apparatus; establishing the rights of labor collectives to manage production;

reviving the traditions of real self-government by the people at the center and at local level, the traditions of Soviet power, and the role of labor collectives in management; striving for the establishment of genuine people's power in the country;

constantly strengthening representative organ deputies' ties with the population, establishing their strict responsibility for fulfilling voters' instructions and the possibility of deselecting deputies who have failed to justify the working people's confidence.

In the sphere of nationalities' policy, national security, and foreign policy:

ending the war in Chechnya, using all available political and other means of influence. Considering it impermissible and criminal to unleash fratricidal wars inside our own country. Urgently restoring peace and harmony in Chechnya on the basis of the consent of the people. Instituting strict proceedings against those who unleashed the war and are carrying out acts of terrorism;

ensuring the national and cultural revival of the peoples of the Russian Federation;

in accordance with the will of the peoples, ensuring on a voluntary basis the process of the phased reintegration of the CIS states into a renewed union of Soviet peoples;

defining the priority zones of Russian national interest and adopting a new foreign policy doctrine ensuring the fatherland's independence;

drawing up and implementing a concept for military organizational development that guarantees the country's national security in all areas and on all its borders;

in conjunction with the Federal Assembly, adopting decisions that rule out the possibility of the Armed Forces being used to resolve conflicts within the country.

The list of acts of legislation proposed for adoption is appended. [MMU not processing]

Adopted 15 February 1996 at the Fourth CPRF All-Russia Conference.

Russia: Candidates Nominated for Presidency Listed

MM1602151996 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Central Electoral Commission Has Registered 45 Action Groups Nominating 31 Candidates for the Russian Federation Presidency"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 14 February the Central Electoral Commission registered 45 action groups and six electoral associations, nominating 31 candidates for the post of Russian Federation president.

The following candidates for the presidency have been nominated:

1. Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin.

2. Aleksandr Alekseyev, chairman of the National Association of Russian Trade Unions (Bologovoye, Tver Oblast).

3. Andrey Zavidiya, president of the "Galand" concern.

4. Aleksandr Rutskoy, chairman of the "Derzhava" social-patriotic movement.

5. Aleksandr Lobanov, president of the Russian-Finnish enterprise "Soyuz Avtomobilnykh Motorov" (Ulan-Ude).

6. Aman Tuleyev, chairman of Kemerovo Oblast Legislative Assembly.

7. State Duma Deputy Boris Fedorov.

8. State Duma Deputy Vladimir Bryntsalov.

9. Pensioner Vladimir Voronin.

10. Anatoliy Sidorov, director of the Institute of Economics and Enterprise.

11. Aleksandr Barkashov, leader of the "Russian National Unity" movement.

12. Artem Tarasov, counselor for economic questions at the "Consolidation" International Confederation of Trade Unions.

13. Sergey Zyryanov, president of the private enterprise "Layf."

14. Pensioner Yan Koltunov (Bolshevo, Moscow Oblast).

15. Sergey Skvortsov, chief editor of NARODNAYA GAZETA.

16. State Duma Deputy Galina Starovoytova.

17. Nikolay Lysenko, chairman of the central council of the National Republican Party of Russia.

18. Mikhail Gorbachev, president of the International Foundation for Socioeconomic and Political Studies.

19. Valeriy Smirnov, chairman of the executive committee of the "People's Salvation Front" movement.

20. Lev Ubozhko, chairman of the "Conservative Party" electoral association.

21. Vyacheslav Ushakov, chairman of the "Moskovskiy Investitsionnyy Fond" open-type joint-stock company.

22. Vladimir Morozov, general director of the "Inyurkon" transnational financial and industrial corporation.

23. Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

24. Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, leader of the "Yabloko" association.

25. State Duma Deputy Boris Gromov.

26. Svyatoslav Fedorov, leader of the Party of Working People's Self-Government.

27. Aleksandr Lebed, leader of the KRO [Congress of Russian Communities].

28. Boris Nemtsov, governor of Nizhniy Novgorod.

29. Writer Yuriy Vlasov.

30. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia].

31. Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation].

The registration of action groups will end 2 March.

Each registered action group must submit at least 1 million signatures in support of its candidate to the Central Electoral Commission; adding up signatures in support of one candidate collected by several action groups is prohibited.

Russia: Yeltsin's, Chernomyrdin's Election Chances Assessed

964F1113A Moscow MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI in Russian 4-11 Feb 96 No 5, p 6

[Article by Vyacheslav Nikonov, chairman of the Politika foundation and doctor of history: "Prime Minister for President?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] An initiative group in St. Petersburg has proposed to nominate Viktor Chernomyrdin for president. The presence at the meeting of Democratic Choice of Russia representatives and the uncoordinated statements coming lately from liberal-reformist politicians have raised questions as to whether they might decide to bet on the prime minister in their search for a united candidate. And if so, will the prime minister agree to such a role?

It is obvious to me that the "party of power," which has very limited support among the electorate, cannot afford to spread its efforts among many candidates. Even among two. And everybody is certain that in mid-February the president will announce that he will run for a second term.

It should be noted that both candidates have certain pluses and minuses. On the prime minister's side there is enviable physical shape and great dynamism, which enables him put to shame veteran travelers in terms of geography and the speed of his movements. At the same time, Yeltsin currently is on the ascendant, too. Chernomyrdin has managed to distance himself from the supporters of the Chechen war, and this alone gives him more reason to count on liberals' support than the president. The prime minister has the reputation of a solid economic manager. Many voters like his predictability. However, much like Yeltsin, he is associated with the less than lustrous results of the socioeconomic policy of the past few years. On his end, the president's rank as a politician is higher, which gives him the ability to line up the power structures in his support. Yeltsin has extensive political experience in conducting national campaigns. And in a populist key, which the prime minister has trouble mastering.

Apparently, though, it is not only Yeltsin's and Chernomyrdin's relative strength that will be put on the scale. In our constitutional system the prime minister is not an independent enough figure to act without looking over his shoulder at the president. Could Yeltsin wish for Chernomyrdin's nomination? This is only possible if the Kremlin team chooses the tactics of "two campaigns." Then both the two highest officials in the state will woo the electorate, and before the first round of elections the prime minister will place the harvest of support into Yeltsin's basket. A possible but not very productive tactic—the electorate of both is quite similar. Neither can one rule out that the "party of power" will want to have a fallback position in the event "something happens to the president" before the elections by nominating Chernomyrdin as a backup candidate. Such a backup is hardly necessary, however, since, should anything happen to the president, according to the Constitution authority is automatically transferred to the chairman of government.

Can the prime minister jump into the presidential race in disregard of Yeltsin's opinion? Chernomyrdin may be prompted to do this (besides the natural desire of any major politician to try for the highest post) by uncertainty in his future. The latest personnel changes and the president's criticism of government bureaucrats do not indicate that the prime minister's position is solid. Besides, the question of a new head of government will arise after the elections anyway. Nevertheless, I do not think that Chernomyrdin will risk an independent play. In this case he would deprive himself of the ability to run the cabinet. And on top of this, as a presidential candidate he will not be able to count on the support of the Russia Is Our Home bloc, which in this case inevitably will be inherited by Yeltsin.

Russia: Yabloko Factor in June Elections Previewed

964F1063A Moscow LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in Russian 7 Feb 96 No 6, p 11

[Article by Leonid Batkin: "Three Big If's: Yabloko and the Presidential Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although in discussing the potential development of events G. Yavlinskiy is mentioned among the four or five most serious participants in the presidential elections, among the forecasts on the topic that I am familiar with, none is favorable toward him. The forecasts are based, for instance, on the results of the Duma elections, in which Yabloko achieved a rather modest success. Although it was the only movement among all the democrats that made it to the Duma, it squeezed in only two points above the threshold and in fourth place, behind even the NDR [Russia Is Our Home], and by a perceptible margin at that.

Alas, the Yabloko leadership did not engage in a public discussion of shortcomings in their activities. They did not explain to their voters why they came up 3-5 percent short of the share they justifiably counted on getting and which many predicted for them. More later on these shortcomings.

Does Yavlinskiy Have a Chance?

In my view, I see the matter in the form of a chain of the following theses. According to the first, and most banal, thesis, Grigoriy Alekseyevich currently does indeed have no practical chance of becoming president of Russia in 1996. But! The second thesis immediately follows. Given a mature approach to carrying out the first of the three big "IF's," namely, with the support of all, or almost all democratically minded voters (first of all supporters of Svyatoslav Fedorov, supporters of Yegor Gaydar, and finally, supporters of all those who in the Duma elections attracted at least 1 percent of the electorate), Yavlinskiy would have a most serious chance *to make it to the runoff.* And then we will be dealing with a completely different situation. The whole picture changes.

This is the most important tactical goal for Yabloko. And, if I may say so, for all democratic citizens who take their responsibility beyond words. For two years it has been clear to any simpleton (provided, of course, he is not a simpleton who is grudgingly and without flattery loyal to the party of power) that the only way to stop the victorious march of the communist opposition would be—*in principle!*—only from the opposite end, that is, the reformist, democratic, but "also" opposition. And nothing else. And nobody else! Thus, history places an incredibly heavy burden on Yavlinskiy's shoulders. He is a good politician. But in these circumstances he simply has to become an outstanding politician.

Still, what are his chances in this case? There will be six or seven, up to 10, contenders in the first round. Which means that the vote once again will be split, albeit not into as many fractions as on 17 December. Unquestionably, the first to make it to the runoff will be G. Zyuganov, with much more votes than his party received in the previous elections. Anyway, as is clear to everyone, these will be *completely different elections.* With different "rules of the game."

Zyuganov will get initially, let us say, 30-35 percent, coming out well ahead of any *first-round runner-up.* This runner-up almost certainly will not be Boris Yeltsin, currently hated by a huge majority of the country's population. Both from the left and the right. He could, however, make it to the runoff if scared philistines and some amazingly shortsighted democratic politicians perceive him as a "lesser evil." Yeltsin could get a boost, of course, from nominating Chernomyrdin "for fun." Nevertheless, he will still lose in the final lap.

Until the middle of January many democrats continued, with the most serious faces, talking about the president as an alleged "covering force for democracy" and possible favorite in the race against the backdrop of "anticommunist" rhetoric void of any *positive political meaning and calculation,* purely negative, and hence hysterical. As if by magic, it has replaced the only one-year-old—but suddenly, and to my taste too greatly, harmfully too greatly subdued now!—"antifascist" hysteria that began in 1993 immediately after Zhirinovskiy's victory. Wait a minute, ladies and gentlemen! Why are you no longer calling us to "antifascist congresses?" They say that it turned out—allegedly "after Pervomayskoye" (why not after Groznyy or Semashki?) but in reality it was clear from the moment of the shameless push for the Yeltsin constitution, which backfired from Chechnya—it turned out that it is not easy even for IZVESTIYA commentators (with the exception, of course, of the most serious ones, such as S. Chugayev and L. Timofeyev) to measure in tonnes or kilometers and compare the present evil with the evil expected in the future.

Actually, the revelation only materialized precisely the next morning after Chubays' dismissal.... Even Ye. Gaydar himself wavered and for the first time renounced "loyal criticism." I say this without tongue in cheek: Wonderful. S. Kovalev, who once said heatedly that "we are governed by bastards," published a wonderful, albeit belated by at least a year, open letter to the president. The exodus of Gaydarites from Kremlin institutions should be politically welcomed in every way possible. This is an encouraging symptom that the situation really is coalescing, polarizing, becoming—no, not simple, of course, but obvious, historically compulsory. It appears the house is already on fire.

Now manifestations of confusion and inconsistency in some positions are no longer all that important. The NDR will be Yeltsin's party in the elections, so let us leave it to the Kremlin insolents to propose tricky and meaningless games. Neither will the esteemed Solzhenitsyn be among the contenders, of course, or some mythical figure not as yet on the political roster. This is, our angels, all from confusion; this is all nonsense, sherry-brandy. Are you really certain that you will not support Yeltsin anymore? Well, even if you dream at night of the "stable"—really?—Chernomyrdin, in practical terms it still means your crossing over to the *democratic opposition* by June. This is all that is important now.

It is precisely your old "critical loyalty," refuted by the logic of events, that primarily, ideologically and objectively, separated Democratic Choice of Russia from the far from unfailing, not always convincing, but consistently democratic-oppositionist Yabloko. It is this "loyalty" of yours to the regime as a whole rather than someone's "personal ambitions" that made a democratic bloc absolutely inconceivable until now. And now—bravo!

However.... Who are you, gentlemen, planning to vote for in the first round, considering that in the event of a runoff you will face a choice between Yeltsin's frying pan and Zyuganov's fire; do you intend, as Kovalev said, for reasons truly principal indeed to boycott them both? Right! There is no decent and practical choice other than from the start supporting Yavlinskiy, whom you personally do not particularly like and on whose name at this point you choke. Well, you will have a great opportunity to prove that for you, personal ambitions, hurts, and even such trifles as *fundamental disagreement in appraisal of the methods of implementing democratic reforms* are not dearer than the opportunity to implement them. *Here it is, the first IF.*

So. Yeltsin will definitely lose as early as the first round unless fear of the ascension of new Communists blots out in democrats' eyes the outrages, lies, and crimes of the Communists of the current, Yeltsin draft. The levers of power and the state treasury are strong, but not strong enough in secret balloting. They will betray the Yeltsinites. The election results will, of course, be habitually falsified. What else is new? It looks, however, as if now, with an organized strong opposition on both the right and the left, with some openness, with political diversity, uncontrollability, and self-interest of bureaucrats on the national scale, the Kremlin will succeed in falsifying no more than 3-4 percent of the ballots in its favor. This means that Yeltsin's rival for second place will need to ensure that he has a lead of 4-5 percent. *The outcome will be decided by a small margin.* Zhirinovskiy will stay at his 11 percent. Let us assume that Yeltsin will still come up with somewhat more than the other also-ran's—let us say, 14 percent. In this case Yavlinskiy will need 15 percent.... This is a difficult (so far) but, in principle, doable task.

The Runoff In the Event of a Change in the Backdrop

Now the third thesis. I am moving on to one of my central points. In the event Zyuganov and Yavlinskiy make it to the runoff, the country will for the first time get the opportunity to choose between true antipodes. Put all your efforts into giving our motherland a *true historic alternative!*

Not only the social content but merely the entertainment value and even a primitive sportslike interest in the elections will sharply increase. There will be two fantastic weeks between the two rounds. Even young people will finally start tuning in for television debates between the two candidates. The turnout for the second tour will be greater on account of those who skipped the first round. Yeltsin would almost certainly lose to Zyuganov, because too many decent people, following in S. Kovalev's footsteps, will not want to support either candidate. As for Yavlinskiy.... If he makes it to the runoff, we will see! In any case, it is unlikely that any "analysts" would say then that he has no chance....

In the first round it probably would be enough if just the democrats (the presumed 20 percent) supported Yavlinskiy. In the runoff, however, they would be joined by many yearning for "stability" and even many Yeltsinites. After all, Yavlinskiy is predictable; he is programmed against any violent redistribution of what has already been stolen, against "re-nationalizations" and such. In this case even for the Yeltsinites (and the directors corps) he should be much less of a scare than the ascension to power of those who are cut from the same cloth as Yeltsin and the Korzhakov and Yegorov crowd. In the event of a victory of the former colleague from the CPSU Central Committee, nobody can predict what will happen. If Yavlinskiy comes, however, those currently in power will have to, well, yes, leave the stage, compete for managerial jobs, and....pay taxes, live by the law. He looks at things realistically and only wants, wholly on the basis of the current state of affairs, to change the legal mechanisms and the social goal of further economic development to fit the course he considers effective. (By the way, have you read his latest book? G. Yavlinskiy. "Russia's Economy: Inheritance and Potential." EPItsentr, Moscow, 1995. Or have you settled for hearsay?)

In the runoff Yavlinskiy could possibly get the support of at least some of those who are not democratically minded but do not want Yeltsin. *Here it is, the second IF.* Zhirinovskiy, as usual, will swing to the side of the strong. Nobody can predict with certainty that he would then not support Zyuganov. It is quite possible. Or call for a boycott of the runoffs. But in either case, Zhirinovskiy's electorate could get somewhat upset and split. Finally—and this is particularly important—Yavlinskiy could attract, let me put it this way, the bottom part of Zyuganov's electorate. Most of them should be clearly distinguished from CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] activists and functionaries. (Has Yabloko been able to impress this at least upon the democrats? No.) They voted for the Communists regardless of any ideology, simply because after *four* years of "reforms" they want to live no worse than before and have their wages paid on time. They are not going to get any help from Zyuganov, who intends to lead them backwards from the bog. They will not be helped by Yeltsin, who is stuck in the bog. Only a democratic president can help them. Will Yabloko be able to, and have enough time to, convince them of this?

What Could Happen If Zyuganov Did Win, But Over Yavlinskiy, Not Yeltsin

Nevertheless—although we still should play to win, and play brilliantly, by necessity optimistically—I believe that Zyuganov's chances will still turn out stronger. Let us be ready for this too. You can expect, gentlemen, instead of an anticommunist Communist an almost orthodox Communist, albeit with faded, unintelligible ideological tenets. Expect a colorless pragmatist Communist, who, however, will not come to power on the wave of a colossal popular revolution and civil war. He will come by the sole reason of tremendous discontent over the results of six years of "perestroyka" and four years of dimwitted "semi-reforms." The historical power engine of Zyuganov's more than possible success and the momentum of such a result would not be the same, you know, as in 1917-1918. And the threat would not be the same. In the final analysis there is no way back. In this respect, Ye. Gaydar is absolutely correct! The gain of one (opposition, neo-communist, and statist) part of the ranks of the former Soviet nomenklatura over another (ruling, "anticommunist," and also statist) part of the same cannot bring about a restoration of totalitarianism. By the way, both parts are considerably intermixed, and looking, for instance, at Yegorov, or Stroyev, or Seleznev, or Grachev I would be hard pressed to separate them neatly into different ideological, sociopsychological, and other pigeonholes. V. Shenderovich probably would handle this task brilliantly.

Gennadiy Zyuganov will not have at his disposal Lenin's elite cohort of ideological revolutionaries, or Stalin's dictatorial apparat, or even Brezhnev's sleepy and smooth nomenklatura. He would come to power in a Russia deeply uprooted by Gaydar-Chubays' NEP [New Economic Policy]. He would lose his way in the broad daylight, using G. Yavlinskiy's expression, of the "post-planned economy." He would fail very quickly.

This does not mean, however, that the new Communists will not make another mess. Oh, no! Our Fool City would face new trials and tribulations after the change of city head. The democratic scab has not yet dried on society's wounds. Chechnya is bleeding terribly. The whole environment is blowing up to hell together with pipelines and such. One-third of the country do not get their semi-pauper wages on time. And the way we are being lied to is like nothing ever before. In the past, actually, we were not lied to at all—information was simply blotted out as such and replaced by a dead ritual, the artificial nature of which was obvious to everyone (hence the phenomenon of "double mentality"). The Zyuganovites would bring into this, and absolutely everything else, their own administrative imagination. They would reopen old sores. Before you know it, they would keep Primakov as minister of foreign affairs, and why not reappoint Yegorov to the post of chief specialist in ethnic affairs?

While fearing a continuation of Yeltsinism and feeling extreme dread over the advent of neo-communism fostered by the current regime, I would not see replacing Yeltsin by Zyuganov in the Kremlin as catastrophic and fatal. Under a certain condition, however. Like S.A. [Kovalev] and many other people, I refuse to choose between bad and worse. But here is what is important. That another option exists.... And this brings in my fourth thesis.

Losses Happen With Different Scores and Consequences

What exactly might happen in Russia in the event of Zyuganov's victory would depend to a great extent, first, as I have mentioned, on who his opponent would be. That is, whether a democratic alternative would flare up and stay in the Russian citizenry's conscience or whether it would only be Yeltsin's defeat. Then what is very bad and has outlived itself since the end of 1993 would be replaced by what is terribly bad and has outlived itself since before 1991. But—secondly. If Zyuganov indeed won but over Yavlinskiy, in this—and only in this—case the historic choice would be clearly marked. And in this case—and this is the whole risk and the whole crux—it is politically extremely important that *the gap would not be overwhelming.* Let us imagine that in the runoff Yavlinskiy—even having lost!—nevertheless wins, let us say, at least 45 percent of the vote. This is already no longer a tactical—it is *the most important strategic goal* for Yabloko (and all democrats): for Yavlinskiy to represent in the runoff—with any outcome—a clear change in the correlation of social forces, a certain shift and real democratic prospect for the future.

What would it mean to lose but with an honorable score? First, that a peaceful and meaningful fundamental polarization of supporters and opponents of true reform finally has taken place in Russia. Its significance would be even more original and promising than the "strange revolution" of August 1991. Second: *With this correlation of forces* in the country, the Communists, regardless of the personal qualities of particular figures and their desires, would not (unlike in the case of victory over Yeltsin) be able to mess things up too much.... Why? More or less for the same reason that Yeltsin and his advisers, much as they would like to, *cannot* risk postponing the elections. One would assume that under these circumstances the Communists, too, would not be able to cancel the *next* elections (or take the risk of a reactionary constitutional referendum). In short, then

Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, having accumulated the interests of a diverse but powerful minority, would become the leader of the whole opposition and....move toward the year 2000 elections.

No doubt the upcoming June 1996 results are of great importance. But Russia's history does not end there. If our sins earned us Zyuganov, this is a good time to prudently inquire: What will happen after him and when?

On Yabloko's Difficulties, Necessary Requirements, Suggestions for Yabloko

These I have, and quite stiff ones at that. I will have to elaborate on them on some other occasion. For now—only an outline. Because this is precisely the third big IF. A lot depends on the social quality of Yabloko's actions and its leader. Grigoriy Alekseyevich is a modern, honest, and passionate man, too impulsive for a politician, in my opinion, and, with all his huge practical economic experience, politically somewhat "immature," as condescendingly noted by television commentator N. Svanidze. God save us from mature ones. We have plenty of those. But it is also correct that G.A. has to learn as he goes, and the last two years have been used less than effectively. There is no group of independent, bright confederates around Yavlinskiy; there is no smoothly operating team. I think that Yavlinskiy frequently loses the pace.

Of course, the rumors of "objective complicity" or even "collusion" with the Communists in the Duma, where the small democratic opposition immediately found itself squeezed between the absolute communist majority and the Yeltsinites-Zhirinovskiyites bloc (236 votes for Seleznev, who would have won even if Yabloko threw in unprincipled support for Rybkin) is pure—how shall I put it mildly—disinformation. As is the contention regarding the alleged "Yabloko program's similarity to that of the Communists—from the pro-inflation position to great-power overtones." I have attentively studied Yabloko's program and slogans ("Reforms for the Majority," Moscow, 1995) and am willing to refute, point by point, this false accusation.

Right now, however, I would rather bring up something else. I think that the Yabloko leadership has not done even a quarter of what is needed to explain their positions. Yavlinskiy defends himself—but somehow not too clearly. The part on the attitude to the past in the declaration of Yabloko's second congress is unsatisfactory, incomplete, and contains vague statements. Yabloko is for a strong democratic state in implementing reforms—they are *statists* and therefore least of all *great-power supporters* (see relevant parts in both the declaration and the "Political Platform"). But even this is not conveyed to society in a thoroughly clear-cut and simple manner. Besides, some statements coming from V.P. Lukin—an intelligent and strong personality—in my opinion, diverge from the party program's planks.

The public does not know what the reader of the aforementioned publications knows. The argument about a 2-3 percent—versus an 8-9 percent but stable, without surges—inflation as a realistic and optimum level for the implementation of structural reforms and production pickup—is this an argument against supporting Yavlinskiy? The question is not whether monetarist methods (shrinking the money supply) are needed—the point is that these methods alone are absolutely not enough and this is not a good reason to split from Yabloko. All right, Gaydar believes that we need to move forward (or at least that it was historically inevitable) only the way he and Chubays did so, and Chernomyrdin followed after them. But Yavlinskiy intends to move forward differently. And Svyatoslav Fedorov brings his own twist to this way "forward." All of them share, in any case, a strong aversion to going to the communist way "backward." Continue to argue. But unite around Yavlinskiy as the only real democratic (*and consequently*, also anticommunist) candidate today. Why would the Gaydarites not make good now on their own exhortation to create a democratic bloc?

Yavlinskiy is being accused of snobbishness and such. And rightly so. He is, of course, a normal ambitious politician, but he is—and I have watched him often—not "snobbish" at all. But he is still terribly dependent on the situation in the television studio, his interlocutors, and such. In human terms, I can understand that G.A. gets easily irritated, looks hurt, gets angry at anchorman's underhand or stupid moves, and protects himself by snubbing the interlocutor and resorting to sarcasm. But politically this is absolutely unacceptable. In front of a huge audience, a politician must forget sarcasm. Viewers take sarcasm as directed at them and call it a "snub...." An image problem, yes! The skill of talking from the screen only directly to the viewers, without didactics and tension, and if appropriate, with humor, without this perpetual fighting stance.

Oh, well. As another Yavlinskiy supporter—but definitely not an apologist, who, like me, frets over the latter's every misstep or even unfortunate intonation—told me recently, first we need to acknowledge him as our democratic leader. Only then will we dump on *our candidate* a pile of concerns, complaints, and suggestions.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Returns to Moscow From Sochi

LD1802191596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1822 GMT 18 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 18 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Viktor Chernomyrdin, head of the Russian Government, ended a short holiday in Sochi and returned to Moscow today.

On Monday [19 February], Chernomyrdin will hold talks at the Government House with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl within the framework of the German leader's visit to the Russian capital.

During the coming week the head of the Russian Government will also meet Michel Camdessus, the executive director of the International Monetory Fund (IMF), who will be coming to Moscow. ITAR-TASS learned from sources in the apparatus of the Russian Government that Camdessus' visit is expected to take place on 21-25 April. In the course of the talks with the Russian leadership, it is planned to conclude discussions on the matter of IMF granting the next credit of about 9 billion dollars to Russia in 1996.

Russia: Kadannikov To Head Commission for Ties With G-7

LD2002113896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1112 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 20 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Boris Yeltsin has issued an edict appointing First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kadannikov as chief of Russia's interdepartmental commission for cooperation with international financial organizations and G-7. The commission was set up by presidential edict on 27 May 1994. He relieved Anatoliy Chubays of these duties. ITAR-TASS has learned of this from a statement circulated by the presidential press service.

Russia: Former Chief Prosecutor Ilyushenko Detained

LD1602132196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1030 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 16 (INTERFAX) — Former acting prosecutor general of Russia Aleksey Ilyushenko is being kept in a Moscow detention center.

Aleksandr Zvyagintsev, a senior aide of the new prosecutor general, told INTERFAX that no charges have been brought against Ilyushenko. The prosecutor general's office has 10 days to do so.

The case against Ilyushenko was opened on February 13 under Articles 170 (abuse of power or authority) and 173 (bribe taking) of the Russian Criminal Code. According to the Prosecutor General's office, Ilyushenko has been interrogated on several occasions in connection with the case of the Balkar-Trading company and its head Petr Yanchev investigated by the Moscow branch of the Federal Security Service.

Russia: Head of President's Control Administration Resigns

MM1902131396 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI Saturday Edition in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Head of Control Administration Relieved of Duties"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Boris Yeltsin has relieved Vladimir Zaytsev of the post of head of the Russian Federation Presidential Control Administration at his own request.

Vladimir Zaytsev has held the post of head of the Control Administration since January 1995.

Russia: CPRF Conference Shows 'Enthusiasm for Unification'

MM1902135396 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Viktor Trushkov: "When the Strong Join Forces, They Become Invincible. Fourth All-Russia CPRF Conference Nominates G.A. Zyuganov As Left-Wing Opposition's Presidential Candidate"]

[FBIS Translated Text] G.A. Zyuganov has been nominated by the country's most popular party. But the conference's importance was not confined to intraparty affairs since it sparked off the unification of all left-wing and people's-patriotic forces.

The keynote speaker at the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] conference — V.A. Kuptsov, first deputy chairman of the CPRF Central Committee — pointed out straightaway that despite the discord in the pseudodemocratic camp, all its "components" — the archliberals of Russia's Democratic Choice, the Russia Is Our Home "householders," the showy oppositionists from Yabloko, and so on and so forth — will ultimately be focused on Yeltsin. The true opposition will it seems have to resist the united front put up by people wanting to bring capitalism and destruction to the fatherland. The keynote speech analyzed thoroughly the disposition of political forces and the conditions for an opposition election victory.

Valentin Kuptsov:

"An agreement has been drafted on the creation of a united left-wing, people's-patriotic bloc. On behalf of the conference it could be sent to other parties and movements. But the CPRF is able and willing to take on all the organizational work. The coalition of parties must nominate a candidate who is capable of being a joint presidential candidate. The overwhelming majority of primary party organizations — over 90 percent — have nominated Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov. As of 15 February 2.2 million signatures had been collected in support of Zyuganov. All that entitles today's conference to back G.A. Zyuganov's candidacy."

Nikolay Ryzhkov, chairman of the "People's Power" group of deputies in the Russian Federation State Duma:

"There is nowhere left for us to retreat.... The main task is to form a coalition, create an electoral bloc. We are wasting time, we are engaged in a criminal waste of time. We must find new allies every day. Only when we have an alliance will we be able to win victory.... The people's-patriotic bloc (and the CPRF is the backbone of this bloc) must have one candidate, a joint candidate. Today G.A. Zyuganov enjoys the greatest prestige among left-wing forces and he is the candidate we must have."

Vasiliy Starodubtsev, chairman of the Agrarian Union of Russia:

"There has been no reform in Russia, what we have had has been well-elaborated plans to destroy our state and our Russian people. Today the question is whether Russia is to exist or not. This is no empty public rhetoric, this is what the people are saying. Yesterday the Agrarian Union Council, a Trade Union of Agro-Industrial Complex Workers Central Council plenum, and the Agrarian Party Board met in joint session. Comrades, never before has there been such unanimity: Representatives of all three components of the agrarian movement said simultaneously that they would vote for a joint candidate — Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov. I have been instructed to say from this platform that the agrarians will fight to ensure victory in the first stage of the elections."

Aman Tuleyev, chairman of Kemerovo Oblast Legislative Assembly:

"I think that another five years of Boris Nikolayevich's rule would ruin the state once and for all. And, bearing in mind the events of October 1993 and the civil war in Chechnya, he simply poses a danger to Russia. In order to halt the breakup of the state, new people must enter the leadership, people who understand how to break the deadlock. Look how many different 'democrats' there are, and still there is no joint candidate, they are fighting like cats and dogs. But we have a whole galaxy [of people], but I am in favor of our having a Public State Council with a leader at its head, Gennadiy Andreyevich. Zyuganov is a national leader and he must contest the elections not on behalf of a party (he is grateful for having been nominated by a party) but on behalf of the people's-patriotic forces."

Viktor Anpilov, chairman of the "Working Russia" Sociopolitical Movement Executive Committee:

"I think that the need for unity among all communist, people's-patriotic forces is dictated by the unique nature of the moment that the whole world, including our great people, is experiencing. World imperialism smashed the world socialist system, devastated socialism, destroyed the Soviet Union, and then methodically began — I would say, with Teutonic pedantry — to eliminate Russia's national independence. What we need is a massing of forces and not just on the communist flank. I agree that the program should be broader than the communist objective. But it is necessary to organize some kind of framework for compromise...."

Yuriy Terentyev, secretary of the Russian Communist Workers Party Central Committee:

"We welcome the movement for a joint opposition candidate, a candidate who represents left-wing, people's-patriotic forces. We are participating in that movement. We can see, we are conscious that a situation is developing whereby Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov will be the joint candidate and we will back him. And it is very important today to determine the tactics that will indeed lead to victory. And victory is just what is needed."

The enthusiasm for unification was supplemented by countless specific proposals regarding election campaign tactics. Apart from the aforementioned speakers, the conference was addressed by V. Rashkin, first secretary of Saratov Oblast CPRF Committee; L. Grach, first secretary of the Crimean Communist Party; V. Koptyug, vice president of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Ye. Gazeyev, chairman of the Council of Workers of Mordovia; I. Osadchiy, coordinator and cochairman of the "Russian Socialist Scientists" Society; A. Arichev, chairman of the Council of Workers of Makhachkala; State Duma Deputies S. Goryacheva and P. Romanov; and others. CPRF Central Committee Chairman G.A. Zyuganov delivered a long speech.

The Fourth CPRF Conference adopted a number of documents. They include "Instructions from the CPRF to Russian Federation Presidential Candidate G.A. Zyuganov" and a "Declaration on the Fundamental Principles of Political Cooperation Between Russia's

People's-Patriotic Forces in Preparing and Holding the Russian Federation Presidential Elections."

And another point. This was the first time in the past 10 years or so that we had heard such an inspired rendition of the "Internationale," with which the conference ended.

Media Issues

Russia: New Media Head Could Not 'Ignore' Yeltsin Decree

LD1702120896 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2107 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Report on interview with Eduard Sagalayev, new chairman of the All-Russian State Television and Radio Company, by unidentifed correspondent; from the "Dismissal of O.M. Poptsov, chairman of the All-Russian State Television and Radio Company" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Begin Eduard Sagalayev recording; identified by caption] Of course it [Russia TV channel] does not paint a black picture. I consider that the Russia TV company is altogether a big gain for democracy and that an enormous contribution to the establishment of the Russia [TV and radio] company has been made by President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, the Russian Government, Oleg Maksimovich Poptsov, Anatoliy Grigoryevich Lysenko, and the entire vast workforce. The Russia TV channel is now an established part of our public life and a very serious and significant part, from which, so to speak, it is impossible to depart. Perhaps it is our civic responsibility and duty as journalists to be able to see not only what is glaringly obvious, but also what is actually happening because in Yekaterinburg I mixed with a lot of people and heard from many of them that the press as a whole pays too little attention to some of the good aspects of our lives and is rocking the boat too much. [end recording]

[Unidentified correspondent] Eduard Sagalayev, the new chairman of the All-Russian State Television and Radio Company [VGTRK], is very knowledgeable about the boat, in particular the television boat, not only as one of the directors of TV-6, Moscow, but also a little earlier as the director of Ostankino news programs. The times are still not long past when telephone rights were indeed an entitlement, and therefore it is important for all of us, and not only those employed by VGTRK at the present time, to know who is taking the place of Oleg Poptsov and why he is doing so.

[Begin Sagalayev recording] Firstly, I am not intending to make any radical changes to the company's work. I consider that, however this transfer of power at the company from one person's hands to another might have come about, there should be continuity and in general the edifice that has been lovingly built must in no way be demolished. It must only be improved and further developed. I think there can scarce be anyone among the viewers or my journalist colleagues that would accuse me of careerism or of striving, as it were, to serve those in authority. Nor do I intend to do so because Sagalayev will *remain as he always has been, and I do not intend to change my views and my conscience in this regard.

It seems to me that the problem is a different one and lies in the fact the Russia TV and Radio Company has a vast audience and professional experience and a specific situation exists in respect of Oleg Maksimovich Poptsov. Indeed I telephoned him today and we agreed to meet. I do not think, if the president does not change his decision — and that is a matter for the president — that Oleg Maksimovich will prefer some kind of protracted warfare, so to speak. I think that he and I will be able to discuss how to preserve what has been built over the years by thousands of people and not destroy it. I personally will be honest with colleagues, the viewers, and the country's leadership. If anyone has a wish to organize the television company in line with their own ideas on life and contrary, so to speak, to the real situation in life, I will react fairly harshly to such a wish. I have done with my share of being afraid. [end recording]

[Correspondent] We do not know yet how all this will end and do not know whether President Yeltsin will listen to our company's journalists. Nor do we know the future of our work. You have heard the position of Eduard Sagalayev, the company's new leader. It is only the cadres issue, the main issue at the present time, that was decided in the old way when on just one day, 14 February, both of President Yeltsin's decrees were signed.

[Begin Sagalayev recording] It was suggested that I take up this post. After thinking about it and realizing that the situation was irreversible and that someone else would be put in the post, I answered certain questions for myself — these concerned of course the matter of my present work and the general situation in the country's television — and I provisionally agreed, expecting that there obviously would be further talks and meetings that would influence the final decision — and of course that there would be a detailed conversation with President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. Besides this, and in any event, I was expecting before the publication of any decree and the adoption of the final decision to have a meeting and talk with Oleg Maksimovich Poptsov. However, when the president flew to Yekaterinburg, I was invited to accompany him on the trip along with a large group of journalists and figures in the world of art and literature. So I flew to Yekaterinburg with colleagues in the press aircraft and attended Yeltsin's speech and his meeting with the press. There was no talk about the subject that is now agitating not only you, but certainly me too. I returned to Moscow and after arriving in Moscow I learned from various evening news bulletins, including the "Vesti" news bulletin, that the decree had been signed.

When the decree was published, I pondered what I should do, and decided that in this difficult situation I cannot ignore the Russian president's decision. [end recording]

Military & Space Issues

Russia: Yeltsin To Cut Industry's War Mobilization Capacities

MK1702094496 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Yuriy Golotyuk under the "Combat Readiness" rubric: "Boris Yeltsin Suggests Mobilization Capacities Be Cut. Russian Industry Turned Out To Be Too Well Prepared for War"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin said at a meeting with representatives of the southern Urals' business community that mobilization capacities of Russian enterprises should be reduced since "presently there is no threat of war" and suggested that civilian products be manufactured on their basis. In Mr. Yeltsin's words, he is ready to stipulate this in an edict, "taking account of proposals made on the ground."

It should be recalled that the mobilization capacities are intended to supply the army with everything it might need (ranging from munitions to servicemen's underwear) during a "special period of time," that is, in the event of war. During peacetime, they are as a rule mothballed and stand idle. Reliable sources at the State Defense Industry Committee of the Russian Federation told your SEGODNYA correspondent that the president's statement was not an apt improvisation — work on "the conversion of mobilization capacities" has been under way for a fairly long time under a confidential edict of Boris Yeltsin. Yet Russian industry still operates according to the old mobilization plan dating back to the Soviet era. Naturally, this causes hosts of problems and bottlenecks, because the plan still calls for the wartime delivery of military equipment to armies of the currently defunct Warsaw Treaty and also to Soviet Union republics. On the other hand, a number of enterprises that had mobilization capacities needed to maintain the army's "minimally required critical level" of combat readiness were left outside Russia after the USSR's breakup (mostly in Ukraine and Belarus).

In the view of State Defense Industry Committee sources, adoption of the new plan would make it possible to free about 20 percent of the mobilization capacities Russia inherited from the USSR (precise figures are still a state secret, but by independent experts' estimates the mothballed mobilization capacities could account for approximately 8-10 percent of the Russian Federation's overall industrial potential). Nonetheless, presently it is impossible to predict even tentatively how efficient the "conversion of mobilization capacities" would be, because their technical equipment is as a rule geared to the manufacture of purely military products and their reequipment would require huge financial infusions, which Russian industry is unlikely to come up with.

Russia: Grachev Addresses Unions on Finances, Abkhazia, Chechnya

MK1702143696 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Stanislav Telegin: "While Standing Up for Trade Union Members, We Should Not Forget About the Interests of the State. The Russian Federation Defense Minister Is Counting on the Support of Civilian Employees of the Russian Armed Forces in the Implementation of Reforms"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As has already been reported, the second congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of Civilian Employees of the [Russian] Armed Forces was held on 15 February. Federation Chairman Spartak Arzhavkin noted in his report that within five years of the first constituent congress, under very difficult conditions of fundamental political and economic reforms in Russia, a viable and effective organization standing up for the interests of civilian employees of the army and navy has been created, which has established firm businesslike contacts with the leadership of the Russian Federation Defense Ministry. The activity of the trade unions is supported by commanders at all levels.

The critical situation in the country and the permanent underfunding of the Armed Forces have not allowed for the resolution of many problems and the implementation of some arrangements already made with the command. Quite a few Russian Defense Ministry work collectives have found themselves in a very difficult situation. Delays in paying wages and other social benefits have become regular. The lack of funding has brought many enterprises, construction projects, research institutions, and design departments to the brink of bankruptcy. Housing construction has been cut back, children's health institutions are being closed down, and labor safety is declining. Under these conditions, the federation and all trade unions are focusing their efforts on the search for new forms of protection of the collective and individual interests of trade union members.

Delegates and guests of the congress were addressed by Army General Pavel Grachev, Russian Federation defense minister. He emphasized that the congress had been convened in difficult times, when the Armed Forces, the country as a whole, and its defense complex are experiencing hardships of the transition period, caused by the fact that the reforms have a profound and large-scale character. Chronic underfunding, delays in paying wages, a production decline, a reduction in jobs, and the departure of highly skilled personnel are creating social tension in work collectives.

Therefore, the main task today is to work out practical measures to alleviate this tension. Trade unions have a great capacity for achieving this task. They are looking for and finding ways to let their collectives survive, are exhibiting resourcefulness, procuring additional sources of funding, rendering substantial material support to people, looking to retain the best employees, and promoting the most advanced technologies.

The minister noted that recently, on the initiative of the Defense Ministry and with the support of the president and the Russian Federation Government, important legislative acts in the interests of civilian employees have been prepared and adopted. To implement them, the defense minister issued 16 orders last year. In 1995, there were five wage increases for civilian employees of the Armed Forces, and wage categories and rates were enhanced. In the interests of the 16,000 families of employees in need of housing, some prerequisites have been created for the settlement of the housing problem in 1996-1997.

In conformity with the trade unions' proposals, work is under way to switch enterprises currently operating on a self-supporting basis to budgetary estimate funding; and the practice of providing free medical care to all civilian personnel has been retained, with 10 percent of beds at military hospitals having been allocated specifically for this purpose. Total expenses for medical care of civilian employees in 1996 will amount to over 200 billion rubles.

Pavel Grachev said that, unfortunately, some things were beyond the Defense Ministry's powers. As of 15 February 1996, the federal budget's wage arrears alone amounted to 5.7 trillion rubles. There are no funds to pay for foodstuffs, fuel, electric power, water supplies, transport, and communications.

The minister paid special attention to the problems of the Defense Ministry's repair enterprises. As a result of a reduction in troop strength, the fulfillment of some international agreements, and a decrease in arms exports, the need for repair facilities has greatly diminished. This is the reality. Therefore, it would be reasonable to consider the possibility of having some of these facilities retooled in the interests of the national economy. The Defense Ministry will render the required assistance in this matter to the heads of these enterprises. The main thing is using the joint efforts of the command and the trade unions, to preserve the unity of collectives, to protect them from politicization, and not to let certain forces profit from the present difficulties.

The congress made corresponding decisions on all issues discussed. Spartak Arzhavkin was reelected chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions of Civilian Employees of the Armed Forces.

During the congress, in the corridors, the minister also answered some questions from reporters. Specifically, speaking about the situation in Abkhazia, Pavel Grachev said that he was going to propose to the president and the Federation Council that the mandate of Russian peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia, which expired on 15 February, not be prolonged. In his opinion, if the conflicting sides "are unable to arrive at a consensus, Russia is not going to keep its peacekeepers there forever."

Speaking about the situation in the Chechen Republic, Army General Pavel Grachev supported the use of both political and military means to settle this problem: "We need to maintain a dialogue with sober-minded people... and to use resolute, forcible measures to do away with the gangsters who are robbing, raping, and killing people." The Russian Defense Minister expressed his regret at the fact that at the time the gangsters were driven off into the mountains, it was ordered that combat operations be stopped in connection with the peace talks.

Russia: General Staff Discusses Threat of Conflicts

MM1602171096 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 16 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Oleg Falichev: "How to Avert Military Conflicts. Russian Armed Forces General Staff Holds Meeting on this Subject"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Unfortunately, we live in a troubled world. The collapse of the USSR, the formation of new sovereign states in its place, the political ambitions of a number of Muslim leaders, the territorial claims against Russia — all this creates preconditions for the emergence of new sources of tension. And if we want to survive, we have to learn to recognize them and eliminate them at the earliest stages. This idea was the leitmotif of the entire meeting with the senior personnel of the Armed Forces organs of military administration and representatives of other Russian Federation ministries and departments, which was held at the Russian Federation Armed Forces General Staff. The list of people invited, which included representatives of the Security Council, the President's Staff, the Russian Federation Government, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Federal Border Service, and other departments, in itself testifies to the importance of the problem.

Colonel General Viktor Barynkin, chief of the General Staff Main Operations Directorate, gave a report. He noted that the question of resolving not only interstate military conflicts, but also armed conflicts on the territory of the Russian Federation comes up on the agenda in real earnest today, since a wave of conflict situations may simply sweep over the country. Military conflict analysis is supposed to study these problems. But unfortunately this has not been given the necessary support in our country in the past. And now questions which have not been studied within the sphere of military science are being put into first place. The result has manifested itself pretty quickly: Today staffs and troops do not know how to operate effectively in the face of armed conflicts. And after all, the threats to Russia's national security have not decreased in the slightest. Not just external threats, but also internal ones, which are not always immediately visible, maybe partly because they are the most insidious.

It is generally known that as a rule the initiators of conflict situations are countries with a weak economy and unstable state-political structure. Alas, Russia is one of these today. And the presence of numerous parties, blocs, and movements, sometimes with completely opposing programs and platforms, not only fails to consolidate society, it brings divisions into it. So, both these and a number of other factors of military danger indicated in the report are present in Russia itself.

But to take the military sphere — this is the state's opportunity to create reliable Armed Forces. But we know what this opportunity looks like today, when there is no money with which to pay out even servicemen's pay. There are also other factors which the government, politicians, and the military simply cannot ignore when resolving issues of national security and the construction of a state legislative base. Unfortunately, the Law "On Defense," so needed by the Armed Forces and the country, has been lying in the Duma for more than a year now. The Law "On the Emergency Situation" and a number of other laws are also awaiting their turn. After all, it is simply impossible, figuratively speaking, to bring together people in uniform, and form Armed Forces worthy of Russia without these basic documents.

A great deal of work has been done in this sphere in the past year or two in the General Staff. This includes proposals of a legislative nature. The Russian Federation Armed Forces plan to conduct a number of command and staff exercises in the near future with the involvement of various ministries and departments. All this will evidently help finally elaborate the best options for the command and control of the Armed Forces and the operational subordination of the internal, border, and other troops to the General Staff when military conflicts are being resolved.

Russia: Six Satellites Launched From Plesetsk

LD1902214596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1449 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Flight Control Center, 19 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — On 19 February three "Gonets" artificial earth satellites were launched from the Plesetsk cosmodrome by a "Tsiklon" carrier-rocket for the new low-orbital satellite communications system, which is being created within the framework of the federal space program, as well as the "Kosmos-2328," "Kosmos-2329," and "Kosmos-2330" satellites for use in the interests of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense.

The "Gonets" satellite data transmission system is being created based on an order of the Russian Space Agency in the interests of state and commercial consumers and is designed to provide private subscribers with the aid of small-scale ground stations in any part of the globe.

The main executor is the scientific-production association of applied mechanics of the Russian Space Agency.

The satellite has been put into a circular orbit with the following parameters:

Distance from the earth's surface — 1,430 km;

Initial period of encirclement — 114.3 minutes;
Inclination — 82.6 degrees.

The launching of the satellites is dedicated to the memory of academician Mikhail Fedorovich Reshetnev, the outstanding senior designer of space rocket technology.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Overrides Yeltsin Veto on Budget Classification Bill

LD1602160696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1310 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 16 (INTERFAX) — The Russian State Duma overcame the presidential veto on the Budget Classification Bill in a 364—3 vote.

Tatyana Nesterenko, a member of the Budget Committee, emphasized that the passing of the legislation enables the Auditing Chamber and the Russian parliament to supervise the implementation of the 1996 budget. The new act specifies the goals and amounts of budget money appropriated for them and which agencies at every level of authority use the financing.

Nesterenko said that the legislation will, for the first time, enable constituent parts of the Russian Federation to use their budget rights.

Russia: Duma Commission Hears General Staff Reps on START-II

LD1902224796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1343 GMT 19 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 19 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Today the State Duma special commission for preparing for ratification of the treaty on the further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive weapons (START-II) listened to representatives of the General Staff from all branches of the Russian Armed Forces, who expressed their positions on the problems of military and strategic expediency for the ratification of this agreement by the Russian side. The sitting was held behind closed doors.

This commission of the lower house of the Russian parliament was instructed to work through and present its conclusions on a draft law on the ratification of the Russian-U.S. treaty, which Boris Yeltsin submitted to the State Duma for ratification in June 1995.

Today's sitting of the commission — which comprises representatives of the Duma Committees for Defense, Security, International Affairs, and Geopolitical Issues — analyzed the role of Russia's strategic nuclear forces in maintaining the country's defense capability, taking into account possible changes in the military and strategic situation, Lev Rokhlin, chairman of the Duma Committee for Defense, reported to an ITAR-TASS correspondent. He said that special attention was paid to a possible change in the balance of forces that could be brought about by NATO's expansion eastward.

The parliamentary commission listened to the General Staff's assessments of the state of the Russian strategic nuclear forces, their capabilities when tackling the tasks of nuclear deterrence, and also the state and development of conventional means of warfare. The commission is to study the considerations of the military and prepare its conclusions on the ratification of the START-II treaty, Lev Rokhlin noted.

Russia: Lukin Says START II Ratification Process Going 'Normally'

LD1902114596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1058 GMT 19 Feb 96

[By Aleksandr Valiyev and Valeriy Sevryukov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 19 (ITAR-TASS) — The process of ratifying START-2 is going "on the whole normally," member of the intergovernmental commission for Russia's entry into the Council of Europe and member of the State Duma foreign affairs committee Vladimir Lukin (Yabloko) told reporters on Monday.

The Duma (lower house) has received the necessary documents from the executive branch of power, signed by President Boris Yeltsin, Lukin said. Currently, "we are looking forward to Premier Chernomyrdin (presenting) a financial feasibility study" for the implementation of the treaty, according to him.

At a plenary session of the Duma, nearly all the faction heads were unanimous in favour of ratifying the treaty, he said.

It "predetermines a favourable result, in spite of a good many questions," according to him. The foreign affairs committee last Thursday was supported the ratification of the treaty, he stressed.

According to Lukin, the Duma will consider the ratification issue on Wednesday. Efforts are being made to have the Federation Council (upper house) convened on Thursday, he said.

Russia: Duma Commission Examines Entry to Council of Europe

LD1902144396 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1300 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On 21 February the State Duma will consider ratification of a package of documents on Russia's entry to the Council of Europe. Members of the interdepartmental commission dealing with this issue briefed journalists on their work today.

[Correspondent Dmitriy Khitarov] Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, said the committee intends to recommend ratification of the package of agreements on Russia's accession to the Council of Europe. All the signs are that most State Duma deputies are also in favor of ratification. If the package of documents is not thrown out by the Federation Council, Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov will sign the final protocol in Strasbourg this month.

According to Lukin, the main irritants are the demand for capital punishment to be abolished, which of course cannot be done overnight and entails reviewing the entire criminal code, and also demands added at the last minute. These are, in particular, the Baltic States' demand for the term "near abroad" to be dropped.

[Isaak Astoyev], head of the international law directorate of the Procuracy General, stressed that work to bring Russian legislation up to European standards is already in hand. Our electoral law already corresponds in full to international levels, said Central Electoral Commission Chairman Nikolay Ryabov. He added that thanks to the Council of Europe's influence Russia has in only four years progressed from total disbelief of the very possibility of democratic elections to international acceptance that our electoral system is fully-fledged.

Russia: LDPR Opposes Moscow Joining Council of Europe

LD1602195796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1647 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 16 (INTERFAX) — All State Duma factions and parliamentary groups but the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) faction want Russia to join the Council of Europe (CE).

The issue was debated in the Duma today in preparation for the February 21 session, when deputies will scrutinize two bills, legally essential for Russia's entry into the council: the May 5, 1994, law "On Russia's adhesion to the CE Charter" and "On Russia's adhesion to the general agreement on CE privileges and immunities and protocols to it."

Russia applied for CE membership on May 6, 1992. The admission ceremony is due on February 27-28, 1996.

Chairman of the Duma Committee for International Affairs Vladimir Lukin stressed that Russia's entry into the council "is advantageous for the citizens who have elected us" since it will help to "curb bureaucracy and arbitrary rule."

The Liberal Democratic Party's Vladimir Zhirinovskiy argued that the documents necessary for Russia to be admitted to the CE should not be ratified for another four years. "As long as we take part in CE, its members will willy-nilly have to put up with us," Zhirinovskiy said, adding that "in four-five years when we prop up our economy, carry out certain reforms, and outstrip them, we will join the CE as full-fledged members." But by joining CE today, Russia would "lose morally, politically, and materially."

Zhirinovskiy said Russia "is lured into a trap" and is forced to "lie under Europe." If Russia becomes a CE member, "it will have to suspend its development for a decade" since it will need "millions upon millions of dollars to correspond to the CE Charter." Visitors to Russia at its expense will "thrust our own dirt under our nose." What the Council of Europe needs "is a kid for beating," Zhirinovskiy said.

Recalling that the CE Charter obliges all nations to settle internal conflicts peacefully, Zhirinovskiy declared, "We abide by different standards. We have been a warring nation for a millennium."

Regional Affairs

Russia: Chechnya Makes Yeltsin's Chances in Dagestan 'Problematic'

LD1902161496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1353 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 19 (INTERFAX) — President Yeltsin's chances of gaining support from Dagestan, an internal Russian republic, during the upcoming presidential elections are "rather problematic," Chairman of the Dagestani Parliament (People's Assembly) Mukhu Aliyev told Interfax Monday.

He said the population of Dagestan was rather critical of the federal authorities' moves in the North Caucasus and "no longer expects them to make any real steps to end the conflict in Chechnya."

Yeltsin's statements are at variance with the actual situation in Chechnya, because Moscow has no plan for stabilizing the situation in the region, Aliyev said.

A long-drawn-out war in Chechnya is likely to cause "an outburst of separatist moods in the North Caucasus," he said.

He noted, however, that Dagestani leaders were ready to act as mediators in the talks on Chechnya "if this idea is supported by all parties involved in the conflict."

Russia: Chelyabinsk 'Enthusiasm' With Yeltsin's Remarks

MM1602180196 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by correspondent Anatoliy Usoltsev: "The Most Dynamic People in the New Russia Are for the President"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Chelyabinsk—Yesterday Chelyabinsk became the second Ural city to receive Boris Yeltsin during these days.

At the start of his preelection marathon, the Russian president feels a natural desire to be in contact with his fellow countrymen from the Urals, to ask their advice, and to hear their comments, so as to adjust the current course of reforms. And Boris Yeltsin himself is prepared, as he has stressed repeatedly during these meetings, to report back on what has been done in the past five years. He said so again in Chelyabinsk, where he has not been since being elected head of state.

The capital of the South Urals greeted the high-ranking guest with 30 degrees of frost. The president caught a slight cold in Yekaterinburg, but that did not prevent him from keeping strictly to the program of planned meetings. And this program was very extensive in Chelyabinsk too. Here there were meetings with the public, a wreath-laying at the Eternal Flame, and a visit to the Traktorozavodskiy Rayon Cadre Retraining Center, after which the president visited a pipe-rolling plant. At midday Boris Nikolayevich met with oblast duma deputies and the leadership of Chelyabinsk Oblast Administration.

One of the president's meetings yesterday was with representatives of South Ural business circles. Local entrepreneurs and businessmen expressed full support for Boris Yeltsin in his intention of running for the post of Russian Federation president for a second term. During an hour-long speech to "the most dynamic people in the new Russia," the head of state presented the program for the third stage of economic reforms in the country.

In particular, he stated that he intends to resolve by presidential edicts the most pressing economic problems and draft laws that have accumulated in the State Duma. Boris Nikolayevich also told the businessmen that he has instructed Vice Premier Aleksandr Zaveryukha to prepare a draft presidential edict on land. This statement was received with enthusiasm. In reply, representatives of business circles stressed that the land problem is one of the most important for the successful reform of the country's economy.

The president's current trip to the Urals is taking place in the context of a turn toward an active social policy which, as he puts it, is not at odds with economic stabilization. It was no coincidence that during this visit to Chelyabinsk Boris Nikolayevich visited an educational and methodological center for vocational guidance and retraining which operates under the auspices of the oblast employment center. After all, reforms in the economy are accompanied by increasing unemployment. And here, the president was told, positive experience has been accumulated in helping the unemployed population to find work. The only trouble is: The employment service itself needs help today. As Vladimir Okhotin, director of the oblast employment center, said, this year his service has been forced to cut back on the active employment policy programs, since the old State Duma reduced the norm for contributions to the extrabudgetary employment fund. The center's workers yesterday asked the president to help secure an increase in contributions norms. He promised to help.

Combining pleasure with business — speeches to a wide audience and meetings with ordinary people — yesterday morning the president visited one of Chelyabinsk's food stores and inquired about the range of goods and the customers' attitudes.

At the end of the day the presidential airliner set course for Moscow.

Russia: Yeltsin Addresses Chelyabinsk Workers on Economy

LD1602155296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1446 GMT 16 Feb 96

[By Yevgeniy Tkachenko and Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHELYABINSK, February 16 (ITAR-TASS) — Some of the aspirants to Russian presidency are very dangerous, said Boris Yeltsin, addressing a rally at the Chelyabinsk tubing mill on Friday. "If elected President they may reduce to naught the effort of these four years of the reform, the years that were very trying for the Russian people, I must admit," the President said. "Therefore, after pondering for long I decided to run for the presidency in order to complete the reform." Earlier in the day Yeltsin told this to people of Chelyabinsk: "I am tired of power. I don't want power. But it is very important to me to complete the reforms that I began."

The President said he decided to run for a second term of presidency for he was concerned that "if there is a candidate who will railroad everything — eliminate privatisation, take away privatised housing, land, nationalise plants and joint-stock companies, this will mean the repetition of the year 1917."

"And who wants this now? Certainly none," Yeltsin said. "Russia does not want this. It will not be able to rally after this again. And Russia began rallying. The year 1995 started with an inflation of 26 percent while in December the inflation was lowered to 3.5 percent. Our task now is to reduce it to two percent. Then prices will be lowering and wages will be growing. This is what we seek now. In 1995 prices grew somewhat faster than wages. The overall living standards did not improve either in 1994 or in 1995. But the year 1996 is the year of stabilisation."

Assessing the economic situation in Russia, Yeltsin said that "the reform is progressing". Although these months the economy is still on the downward swing, that is there is some falloff of production, it can be said that the upsurge of the Russian industry is in the offing in many areas, specifically in metallurgy, in the oil, oil-and-gas, forestry and chemical industries.

When the growth of production begins, "we shall embark on the third stage of the reform — investment, both Russian and foreign. Capital will cease to be flowing abroad. Instead it will be returning to Russia from abroad," the President said. Yeltsin said the consumer market in Russia will be put in order. Shops are stocked with all kinds of goods, although prices are still high.

The President said that, as earlier, his attitude is that of determination. He told people of Chelyabinsk that several ministers and chiefs of regional administrations were dismissed for failing to fulfil presidential decrees and federal laws. "This is how we will act. It is time, at last, to instill discipline and order," Yeltsin said.

Regarding the situation in the housing area, Yeltsin said that ten percent more housing than in 1994 was built last year. Still the President believes people cannot afford building their own houses because of the level of their wages. The averages wages in Chelyabinsk, for instance, are 700 thousand roubles. And people in Russia got accustomed to having houses of their own. Therefore, it would be reasonable to enable Russians to take long-term loans and buy houses on an installment plan, Yeltsin believes. The President suggested to decide this problem by a presidential decree, if people in Russia have such a need.

Workers of the Chelyabinsk tubing mill posed many social problems of the enterprise to the President. Responding to their request, Yeltsin instructed authorities to allocate ten billion roubles to the Chelyabinsk region for an urgent repayment of the debt of the local budget to the population for subsidies to children. "Children are a sacred matter. And these sums are not so large. Let us supply funds from the federal budget, but the local administration must be deciding these problems prompter. They must be solved ultimately by mid-March," the President said.

Regarding the state of affairs in the Chelyabinsk region, Yeltsin said it is considerably better than in the neighbouring Sverdlovsk region which he visited on Thursday. Yeltsin said the debt of the Sverdlovsk region to the state makes up nearly 500 billion roubles, although the federal budget owes certain sums to people of the Sverdlovsk region for the payment of wages. Wages will surely be paid, but it is unclear when the Sverdlovsk region will pay its debt, the President said.

At the end of the impromptu rally during which the President, the head of the Chelyabinsk regional administration and workers spoke from a rostrum put together in the body of a truck, the resolution was passed. In the resolution, workers of the Chelyabinsk tubing mill unanimously backed Boris Yeltsin's decision to run for a second term of presidency. Workers expressed the hope that Yeltsin will win the June election.

Russia: Chechnya Commission Outlines Possible Solutions

LD1602155996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1524 GMT 16 Feb 96

[By Tamara Zamyatina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 16 (ITAR-TASS) — The Russian government's newly formed commission on settlement of the Chechnya crisis held its first working meeting on Thursday, chaired by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

The bulk of the commission are firm opponents of the use of military force in Chechnya, Deputy Prime Minister Vitaliy Ignatenko said today at a meeting with editors of Russian media at the Itar-Tass news agency.

Russian Minister for Nationalities Vyacheslav Mikhaylov, Chechen government head Doku Zavgayev and writer Anatoliy Pristavkin, who are on the commission, reiterated him, saying that "the power option has not been considered" at the Thursday meeting.

Mikhaylov outlined the "seven variants" of solution to the Chechnya crisis which had been cited by President Boris Yeltsin.

Mikhaylov said three of them had been drafted and submitted to Yeltsin by a meeting chaired by First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets.

"As Oleg Soskovets invited to that meeting people of different views, their opinions differed and reflected several approaches to the problem: from resumption of work by the special commission overseeing the military accord of July 30, 1995 to the power solution alone," Mikhaylov said.

The fourth option has been offered by Oleg Lobov, the Russian president's envoy to Chechnya. According to Mikhaylov, this project, endorsed by Zavgayev, maps out restoration of Chechnya's public amenities, creation of jobs, strengthening of law and order institutions and phased withdrawal of federal forces from Chechnya.

The fifth approach has been advised to Yeltsin by his aide Mikhail Krasnov: normalisation in Chechnya first, negotiations on its political status second.

The six variant of settlement comes from President Mintimer Shaymiyev of Tatarstan, Russia's Muslim-dominated republic. Shaymiyev sees negotiations with separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev as the sole way out of the deadlock. However, Chechnya's leader Zavgayev voiced strong opposition to the idea at today's meeting with media.

The president of Ingushetia, Ruslan Aushev, had also advocated the talks with Dudayev as he met Yeltsin in the Kremlin.

A meeting of the presidential council on February 9 has drafted what Yeltsin said would be the eighth settlement variant which is to be formulated by the commission led by Emil Pain.

The commission is to overview all the settlement plans within two weeks to come up with its final recommendations.

Russia: Novogroznenskiy Operation Nearly Complete Says Spokesman

LD2002072696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0615 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW February 20 (ITAR-TASS) — The operation to eliminate the estimated 1,000 Chechen militants in the settlement of Novogroznenskiy, 40 km east of Groznyy, is nearing completion, Interior troops spokesman Vasily Panchenkov told Tass by telephone from Groznyy on Tuesday morning.

He said the militants rendered "active resistance" to federal troops on Monday.

One servicemen was killed and four wounded, according to the spokesman.

Panchenkov said practically all civilian residents had left the settlement.

"Women, children and elderly people were freely let out through a safety corridor. The male population was checked and some people were detained", the spokesman said.

On Monday General Anatoliy Kvashnin, the commander of the North Caucasus military district, said the operation to eliminate the militants in Novogroznenskiy was to be completed by Monday evening.

Russia: Tatar President on Situation in Republic

MS2002095296 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 20 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by John Thornhill, incorporating interview with Tatar President Mintimer Shaymiyev: "Island of Pragmatism in Russia"; date and place not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A heroic painting of Bolshevik leaders proclaiming Soviet power in Tatarstan in 1917 will soon be stripped from the main staircase of the presidential palace in Kazan's white-walled Kremlin and replaced by one portraying 30 of the region's most famous sons.

The change symbolises Tatarstan's desire to erase vestiges of its Soviet past and reestablish its own traditions as an independently-minded and largely Moslem republic within the Russian Federation, some of whose 4m inhabitants can trace their origins to the Mongol horde of Genghis Khan.

Waiting more than four years since the collapse of Soviet power before making the symbolic change testifies to the gradualist instincts of Mr Mintimer Shaymiyev, Tatarstan's president. The 59-year-old Tatar leader has succeeded in charting an increasingly independent course for the central Russian republic without rejecting its recent history and irrevocably alienating Moscow.

Mr Shaymiyev's pragmatism, laced with tough-minded Tatar determination, enabled his republic to sign an advantageous power-sharing treaty with Moscow in February 1994. Tatarstan won full ownership rights over its large oil reserves and industrial companies, the right to retain the bulk of tax revenues and to conduct an independent foreign economic policy.

In so doing, Mr Shaymiyev neutralised extreme Tatar nationalists who called for full independence and averted a potentially bloody conflict with Moscow. The contrast with Chechnya, the only other Russian republic which refused to sign the 1992 Federation Treaty, is painfully clear.

The "Tatarstan model" has formed the basis for similar treaties Moscow recently signed with other regions, such as Sverdlovsk, and would appear to be the only possible blueprint for a political settlement of the Chechen conflict.

Mr Shaymiyev's achievements have won him much popularity in Tatarstan and he is likely to run unopposed in the republic's presidential election next month. The Communist party, which is riding high elsewhere in Russia, has withdrawn its candidate, fearing an embarrassing defeat.

In an interview, the avuncular Tatar leader, argues that a loose federation of Russia's multiethnic regions would lead to healthy and mutually beneficial relations between Moscow and responsible local governments. The Soviet stranglehold over the regions, which even extended to setting the fat content of Tatar milk, stifled regional enterprise and placed an excessive burden on Moscow.

Mr Shaymiyev's pragmatic approach extends to Tatarstan's relatively autonomous economic policy under which it has tempered market reforms with continued government support for the giant state enterprises which employ the bulk of the local workforce. "I think Russia could have fashioned its economic reforms along the Chinese way and avoided many of the social problems it has today," he says.

Mr Shaymiyev was a fierce critic of the "shock therapy" adopted in 1992 by the Russian government, headed by Mr Yegor Gaydar. At the time, critics labelled Tatarstan an "island of communism" for failing to liberalise prices, privatise state property, and axe credits to obsolete industrial plants as happened in the rest of Russia.

"Shock therapy affected a big proportion of the population and resulted in a landslide of impoverishment. We therefore decided to change things more gradually in Tatarstan," he says.

But while the pendulum of economic reform appears to be swinging back in Moscow towards greater state intervention, Tatarstan is now determined to forge ahead with its own brand of market reforms. It is looking to privatise more companies and is determined to cut bureaucracy, promote small businesses and attract foreign investment.

With 10 percent of Russia's oil output and some of Russia's biggest industrial plants, such as the 100 sq km Kamaz truck complex at Naberezhnie Chelny, Tatarstan could act as a natural magnet for foreign investment. General Motors, the US car company, has already signed a contract to produce 50,000 Chevrolet Blazers a year at a plant in Yelabuga.

But some political observers argue the benign outlook for Tatarstan stems from Moscow's temporary weakness and that its current autonomy will be reeled in if a revitalised Russian state reverts to the centralising traditions of both Tsarist and Soviet times.

A Communist victory in the presidential elections in June may heighten tensions between Moscow and Kazan. Some currently overlooked contradictions between Tatarstan's constitution and the treaty of the Russian Federation could provide the grounds for fresh ructions.

But Mr Shaymiyev believes the Communists will have many more pressing concerns to deal with before turning their attention to a prosperous, peaceful Tatarstan.

And there is an edge of menace in his words which suggests Russia's Communists would be wise to listen.

"Tatarstan is not Chechnya. It is much bigger and more significant," he says. "The Tatars are the second biggest ethnic group in Russia. No sane politician would want a confrontation with the Tatars."

Russia: Sobchak Cited on Country's Defense Capability

MM2002111896 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Vyacheslav Goncharov: "People Listened Attentively to Sobchak"]

[FBIS Translated Text] St. Petersburg has already started celebrating Fatherland Defenders Day. Observers have drawn attention to the somewhat unexpected tone of the city mayor's speech on unveiling a memorial to those who fell in the Afghan war.

The words of the leader of the Northern Palmyra [allusion unknown] were devoid of their characteristic veneer of cosmopolitanism. For the first time in recent years the mayor of St. Petersburg emphasized the fact that the country's Armed Forces are one of the foundations of Russian statehood.

A. Sobchak's thesis on the reasons prompting a further enhancement of the Russian Armed Forces' combat readiness was deserving of attention. According to him, these reasons are that Russia is encountering new challenges even after the end of the "Cold War." The selfsame challenges that the rest of the civilized world is encountering.

Sobchak cited another reason for the need to maintain the country's defense capability at the proper level. He declared that certain countries which wish to rid themselves of the imaginary status of "buffer" countries are seeking to swell the ranks of NATO members. And yet these countries' relations with Russia are not free of the vexing accretions of the past.

The mayor proclaimed the city authorities' determination to promote both the country's defense capability and the resolution of servicemen's social problems.

Economic Issues

Russia: 1995 Budget Deficit 48 Trillion Rubles

LD1902175696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1653 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 19 (FIA-INTERFAX) —The federal budget deficit in 1995 was 48 trillion rubles [R], 12.4 trillion R or 21 percent below the planned level, a Russian Finance Ministry official told Interfax Financial Information Agency .

The official said that the budget deficit was 2.9 percent of the GDP compared to 10 percent in 1994. By early accounts, the revenue of the 1995 budget totaled 238.5 trillion R, and the spending, 286.5 trillion R.

According to the official, the budget implementation process was destabilized by an unplanned increase in wages for state employees and military personnel. As a result, a 2.84 trillion debt was incurred.

The official said that the budgetary process was nearly normal for the first time in the years of reform.

Russia: Views on Dilemma Over Caspian Oil Consortium

MM1602172196 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 16 Feb 96 pp 1,2

[Article by Sergey Leskov: "Caspian Pipeline: Another Flare-Up"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The behind-the-scenes circumstances of the struggle over oil deposits of the former USSR deserve to be the subject of a thriller. The latest sensation is the major scandal, with unpredictable consequences, that is unfolding over one of the most high-profile projects, connected with the construction of the pipeline from the Tengiz deposit in Kazakhstan to the Russian port of Novorossiysk. Mixed up in the affair are the oil monopolies' multibillion interests, government members, special services, leading banks, and charlatans who would put Cagliostro to shame....

I Am in Charge

The idea of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium [CPC] was conceived around four years ago. The Dutch entrepreneur Dzhon Doys [name as transliterated], an odious figure, described in the Western press as a "fortune hunter," was in on it from the beginning. In the seventies Doys made a fortune out of deliveries of oil from Oman to South Africa in circumvention of the embargo that was in place at the time. Later the businessman executed a cunning scheme involving letters of credit issued by him to the Soviet "Soyuznefteeksport" for the supply of 3 million tonnes of oil, 350,000 tonnes of fuel oil, and 500,000 tonnes of diesel fuel. As a result of the swindle Doys failed to return $101.8 million to the USSR, while the entire "Soyuznefteeksport" leadership left, leaving debts behind, when they lost their party cards.

Special economic sanctions were employed against Dzhon Doys in the West. He had to sell all his enterprises in the United States and close the firm's London branch. What helped keep him afloat was our perestroyka....

According to IZVESTIYA's information, at the beginning of the nineties Russian special services (Barannikov personally wrote a letter on this score) warned Kazakhstan of the risk inherent in dealing with Doys. But Kazakhstan was utterly dependent on the oil sector and was trying to resolve the problem of its being cut off from the outside. But Doys understood our realities and knew how to turn an official who was the businessman's bitter enemy into his enthusiastic assistant. Subsequently the careers of many Kazakhstan ministers who had had dealings with Doys came to an abrupt end. It is said he framed them to avoid having to pay for what he had promised.

It was Doys who acted as consultant to the Kazkahstan government when the contract was concluded with the U.S. firm "Chevron" on the development of the Tengiz deposit, one of the richest in the former USSR. But the oil needed to be transported from Tengiz. That is how the Caspian Pipeline Consortium came about, with Russia, Kazkahstan, and Oman, which was represented by Doys' offshore firm, "Oman Oil Company," having equal shares in it. The first two participants provided CPC with manpower, materials, equipment, existing pipelines, and land. Oman pledged to pay for the planning work and feasibility study and to organize the investment machinery.

Whereas Russia tried to dissuade Kazakhstan from working with Doys on Tengiz, such questions did not arise in connection with CPC. You don't have to be Spinoza to figure out that Doys had found the way to Russian officials' hearts. At that time he became a regular visitor to Moscow, whereas before, when changing planes, he had not stepped outside "Sheremetyevo." Many Russian officials went to Bermuda, where Doys' company was registered. The "Transneft" pipeline company gave full backing to his initiative. Its president, Valeriy Chernyayev, is also chairman of the CPC Executive Committee. Experts' doubts about the partner's unreliability, which, incidentally, IZVESTIYA too had been voicing for a year, were not heeded.

I Will Ask for Contributions

The Caspian pipeline project was astonishingly grand. The total length was 1,500 km. Although the 800 km from Tengiz (they had started organizing it back in the Soviet era) to Komsomolskaya had already been constructed. Throughput capacity — 60 million tonnes of oil per year. The documents clearly state that if Western banks fail to issue credits, Oman will use its own resources to ensure that construction takes place.

CPC means not only Kazakhstan oil and Russian tariffs for its transit. It means increased exports of Siberian oil, it means creating a single system, with the pipelines of the Azerbaijan "project of the century," it means the construction of a modern terminal on the Black Sea, it means Russian influence in alternative export routes, for example, via Turkey. It is also a demonstration of Russia's potential in major investments projects.

The project appeared to be a certain winner and easy to carry out. Western banks were delighted to finance the construction of the pipeline, which is regarded as the most profitable of profitable investments. It was technically straightforward and money was on tap. But all "Oman Oil Company's" efforts to find an investor ended ignominiously. So far no Western banker has risked entrusting his funds to a businessman with a stain on his reputation.

Out of fairness it must be said that so far only Oman has spent real money on the project — $90 million on planning work. But the value of the capital transferred to CPC and of the pipelines that have already been constructed is put at $525 million. Only Russia has paid its share, Kazakhstan is biding its time.

But it is perhaps "Chevron's" position that has been an even greater impediment to CPC. "Chevron" has not given guarantees of the transfer of the volumes required to make the project cost- effective. The Americans were offered a 25 percent holding in CPC and the price fluctuated between $280 and $700 million, with a commitment to ensure investments. "Chevron" refused. It made no secret of its reasons: Oman pays less, but gets more profit. "Chevron" sharply reduced investments in Tengiz and was extracting a modest 2.5 million tonnes, as in far-off Soviet times. Its leaders made statements to the effect that "there are deposits in the world more interesting than the former USSR."

Experts argue that "Chevron," having paid Kazakhstan around $300 million for the right to develop Tengiz and thus pay 50 percent of the profit while having full financial and production control, earned at least $3 billion from increased share prices. Moreover, when production is increased to the planned 13 million tonnes per year "Chevron" has to pay Kazakhstan $420 million. But why hurry to invest in a project which others intend to profit from? Moreover, a regrouping of forces has already taken place in the Kazakhstan leadership — the ministers who had been fed tidbits by Doys had vanished and pro-American officials had taken their place. Oil Minister Nurlan Balgimbayev had formerly worked in California at "Chevron." Not only did Kazkahstan not pressure its partner, but it did not even transfer its finished pipeline to the CPC.

In conversation with your IZVESTIYA correspondent, Edvard Smit [name as transliterated], general director of CPC and at the same time "Oman Oil Company's" representative in the consortium, claimed that Russia should have given guarantees of the transfer of oil but did not do so. But Viktor Ott, first vice president of the "Rosneft" company, categorically disagrees. According to him, the so-called "comfort letter" was handed to Oman at the agreed time. The letter guaranteed that in the event of a supply shortfall by "Chevron" "Rosneft" would make it up to the required nine million tonnes per year. This story is supported by Fuel and Energy Minister Yuriy Shafranik.

Even the scaled-down version which appeared during the past year — construction of the first phase of the pipeline from Kropotkin to Novorossiysk with a floating terminal in the Black Sea — was too much. The deadline for starting the construction, 1 January 1996, with handover of the project in the first quarter of 1997 was not met.

Fine, You Are Not From Paris. You Are From Kologriv

Then a new character appeared on the scene — the Russian oil company "Lukoyl." Edvard Smit cautiously hinted that "Lukoyl" is using "marked cards" in Kazkahstan. He confirmed this by showing an article from a foreign magazine, where it claimed that the Russian company's tentacles extended into many regions and just to be sure it had given luxurious "presidential" aircraft to Nazarbayev, Luzhkov, and the "Gazprom" chief. The news caused amazement in "Lukoyl." The company had only one YaK-142, which had been officially sold to Kazakhstan for $17.5 million.

But obviously it is not a question of gifts. In the past month the idea of an alternative consortium has emerged and is being worked on flat out. In it Russia's and Kazakhstan's shares remain the same, but there are some new participants — "Lukoyl," the United States' "Chevron" and "Mobil," Italy's "Agip," and "British Gas." There is no sign of Oman in the consortium and the most that is left for it is two percent. There nothing now about any guarantees on Russia's part. The new participants, unlike Doys' firm, are not just intermediaries, but actual producers, who will pump their own oil, and, consequently, they are also potential investors. Minister Yuriy Shafranik stressed that the new CPC will try to preserve as far as possible the work that was done by the first consortium, but it will choose a different financing scheme.

Eduard Smit came to the IZVESTIYA editorial office to demonstrate that the deal that has been undertaken would do Russia harm. The logic is as follows: The producers want to see lower transport tariffs — Russia's income would consequently be reduced. But this is not obvious, after all "Lukoyl's" participation (28 percent state-owned) automatically increases Russia's share of the revenue. Vladimir Ardayev, IZVESTIYA correspondent in Kazkahstan, reported that Kazkahstan Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin announced the other day that "Lukoyl" has been chosen as the project's technical operator. It is not inconceivable that it or "Rosneft" (51 percent state-owned) will be given other functions.

Andrey Aderekhin, the paper's correspondent in Krasnodar, also chipped in. He reported that the kray administration has sent a protest to Moscow against the feasibility study prepared with Oman's participation. The administration believes that if this option is implemented the kray's economy will be harmed and its environmental security will be in jeopardy. The kray would account for 51 percent of CPC capital investment and the kray budget would receive $2.3 billion.

But the chief argument against the view that Russia will lose face in the new consortium is to be found elsewhere. Russia has major political and economic interests in Kazakhstan and in the consortium. "Lukoyl," in particular, has already invested $100 million in Kazkahstan and will extract 2 million tonnes of oil there in 1996. For the money to return to Russia you have to ensure oil exports at minimum cost. Oman was unable to do this. And in economic matters, as in politics, there are no permanent friends — there are permanent interests. So the search for a reliable finance mechanism was dictated by Oman's own failures.

Russia Will Not Forget You

The alternative CPC, as you would logically expect, is arousing heightened interest among Western banks. The major "First Boston" bank has expressed its desire to join in the $2 billion project, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which described Oman's proposal as "improper," is showing an interest. It is indicative that Oman's financial calculations were based on 50 percent fewer investments and still met with no sympathy.

Now here is the latest sensational news. Dzhon Doys has given up all his posts in the Caspian Pipeline Consortium. According to the Kazakhstan prime minister, the council of directors of the Oman- related CPC has also resigned en masse. But Oman itself amended this by saying that a major reorganization is taking place and Commerce and Industry Minister Makbul bin Sultan will become chairman.

According to the experts, the commissioning of the pipeline will be delayed for two-three years at the very least. The information for lovers of figures is as follows: CPC's dividends were put at $500 million per year and revenue from oil exports at $3 billion per year. For any economy such losses are a killer; the only thing that rescues us is our unflagging patience. As one senior Russian functionary believes, the none too successful choice of a partner is explained by the fact that in the early nineties we would listen spellbound to any foreigner who only needed to have modest gifts of eloquence in plying us with promises. But have we accumulated enough experience to guard against such unfortunate incidents?

CPC is an instructive example of the clash between the economic interests of East and West. And there will be no balance here. According to the latest reports, a group of Western companies and Kazakhstan are making behind-the-scenes efforts to divide the package of CPC shares in such a way that they are still able to make any decision of their own and block any Russian decision. So it is not inconceivable that Russia, having turned away from Oman, could get closer to it again. It is an agonizing choice for a country that lies at the crossroads between East and West: Who is richer and more reliable — Arab shaykh or European bankers?

What is this playing for big stakes, what are these petrodollars? The billions make your head spin and even an expert accountant would find it rather difficult to sort them out. For simplicity's sake you might compare the revenue of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium with the Russian treasure's income from privatization, with all the torment of the shares-for-loans auctions — $1.7 billion. Hence the whole story, all the to-ing and froing...

International Affairs

Ukraine: Kuchma's Unofficial U.S. Visit Previewed

MK1702140296 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Tatyana Ivzhenko: "Leonid Kuchma Travels to United States"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma's unofficial working visit to the United States will take place between 20 and 22 February. This is the first unplanned visit abroad by the head of the Ukrainian state, organized at the invitation of "Freedom House," an American nongovernmental human rights organization. Created at the initiative of Eleanor Roosevelt in 1941, this organization now operates in a majority of countries around the world and has a consultative status with the UN. A "Freedom House" permanent mission was set up in Ukraine in 1994. The organization now cooperates with nongovernmental Ukrainian human rights and research organizations under the USAID Habits of the Hearts program. The "Freedom House" mission in Moscow discontinued operation last summer following several failed attempts to hold human rights conferences, with a row involving the Russian Federal Security Service in their wake.

"Russian special services assessed the operation of 'Freedom House' in Moscow as interference by a private foreign organization in the internal affairs of the Russian state. We have established fine business and friendly relations with the Ukrainian leadership," said Adrian Gevrik, head of the Ukrainian "Freedom House" mission. According to him, Leonid Kuchma will be presented with the Liberty Prize, earlier awarded to, among other people, Sir Winston Churchill and Sergey Kovalev. The ceremony will be held in Washington during a dinner for the Ukrainian president in the presence of well-known American politicians and businessmen.

As he handed the official invitation to Leonid Kuchma, "Freedom House" Director Adrian Karatnitsky noted the considerable services of Ukraine's second president in establishing a rule-of-law state and a civil society in Ukraine. In Adrian Karatnitsky's words, Leonid Kuchma is following a balanced internal and external policy, which promotes the process of democratization the world over. The Ukrainian president will make a speech in Washington entitled "The Process of Democratization in Ukraine as a Factor for Stronger Stability in Europe." This information caused a scandal between the Ukrainian president's staff and the chiefs of Ukrainian state television's Channel One (UT-1). As UT-1 was reporting the other day on Leonid Kuchma's meetings with U.S. President Bill Clinton and Vice President Albert Gore planned for 20 February, it also made public what it said was information derived from sources close to the Ukrainian president to the effect that the president intends to ask the American leadership for support in resolving Ukrainian-Russian economic and political problems. President Kuchma's staff insists that the subjects to be discussed by the Ukrainian and American presidents deal exclusively with the expansion of bilateral relations. Leonid Kuchma and Bill Clinton will also discuss problems of decommissioning the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, the provision to Ukraine of the fourth (postponed) IMF credit tranche, and American investment in the development of Ukraine's industry. All of these subjects, the Ukrainian president's press service advises, were discussed in advance during Leonid Kuchma's recent meeting with U.S. Ambassador to Kiev William Miller. As for Russian-Ukrainian relations, Kuchma intends to raise in Washington the question of compensation by Moscow for the cost of tactical nuclear weapons shipped from Ukraine in 1992-1993.

In order to discuss any other problems now faced by Ukraine which call, in the view of the Ukrainian leadership, for the intervention of the United States, "Freedom House" will organize a return visit to Kiev by President Bill Clinton in April-May of this year. The Ukrainian president's staff assessed the upcoming reciprocal visits as an event of tremendous political importance which could move Ukrainian-American relations to a qualitatively new level.

Ukraine: Kuchma To Raise Chernobyl, Financial Aid During U.S. Visit

LD1602203596 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1730 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Rovno — During his forthcoming meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton, Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma intends to raise the question on including, on a compulsory basis, the issue of closing down the Chernobyl nuclear power station, as a separate issue, on the agenda of the G-7 meeting in Moscow, which is to be held with Russia's participation. Kuchma told this to a press conference in Rovno on 16 February. "There are many problems connected with that issue, including the problem of finishing the construction of the fourth generating set at the Rovno nuclear power station as compensation for the closure of the Chernobyl station," he said.

The president said "many" issues would be discussed in Washington. "Ukraine would like to have in 1996 a clear cut program for rendering financial assistance to its economy", Kuchma emphasized. He said "the level of cooperation between Ukraine and international financial organizations cannot satisfy Ukraine." "If the

United States is willing to support us, it should make appropriate steps in that direction," Kuchma said.

Ukraine: Deputy PM Shpek Discusses Reforms With U.S. Officials

WS1902095296 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0401 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Feb. 16 — Ukrainian reforms were discussed during recent negotiations between Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister, Roman Shpek, and U.S. Assistant State Secretary Strobe Talbott.

Heading a Ukrainian delegation to the U.S., Shpek also met with members of the World Bank, the U.S. State Department and Security Council, and Deputy Finance Minister David Lipton.

According to Shpek, the political, economic and social aspects of Ukraine's reforms were the primary issues discussed in his talks with Talbott, who said that Ukraine seems to be "single-minded in carrying out its program of reforms."

According to Shpek, members of the U.S. State Department were interested in Ukraine's position concerning its integration into the world community in general, and its regional integration with Russia and the former Soviet states, in particular.

The National Security Council discussed the social and economic factors influencing the course of Ukraine's reforms, and the importance of timely restructuring in the country's agriculture, power, engineering, and coalmining industries.

During the meeting with Deputy Finance Minister David Lipton, the parties exchanged opinions about Ukraine's economic development strategies and its cooperation with international financial organizations and country-creditors such as Group Seven, Russia and Turkmenistan. Shpek said the Ukrainian delegation strongly supported small business ventures as a means of lessening social and economic tensions in the country.

During meetings at the World Bank headquarters, strategies of cooperation with Ukraine were discussed, particularly in the spheres of engineering, agriculture, coalmining, privatization, and banking.

World Bank consultants also discussed measures which might create more favorable conditions for direct foreign investments in Ukraine.

Ukraine: Moroz Says West 'Taken Control of Entire World'

LD1802182396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1614 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Feb 18 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The chairman of Ukraine's parliament, Socialist Party leader Oleksandr Moroz, on Sunday accused the West of having taken control of the entire world.

With the former communist bloc having fallen apart, the dominant positions in the world have been seized by the Group of Seven industrialized countries, Moroz told a Socialist Party conference in Kiev, announcing a party program statement.

After the two mutually opposed blocs ceased to exist the G7 became able to dictate its policy and has been trying to coercively establish a "new world order," he contended.

Decisions by the International Monetary Fund and other international bodies are represented as meeting "the needs of the world community," but the G7 "in effect makes use of international organizations, military force and finance to force its economic, political and cultural values" on the world.

"Drawing central and eastern European countries into NATO" serves the same purpose.

The objective of Western policy in the Commonwealth of Independent States CIS) is to maintain "instability" there. Western nations also "raise obstacles to the rapprochement between CIS states" and thereby manage "to eliminate competition on the world market and seize the natural wealth of the Commonwealth countries."

Ukraine: Official Views Foreign Trade Policy

WS1602130796 Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian 13 Feb 96 p 7

[Commentary by Ihor Nikolayko, chief of the Main Department for Issues of External Economic Relations of the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers, "recorded" by URYADOVYY KURYER correspondent Yuriy Medunitsya: "Export and Import in the Context of Reforms"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Ukraine's foreign economic policy is oriented toward further integration into the global economy. The ways to such integration are known: openness of the national economy, restructuring of import-export commodity structures, enlargement of export potential, and stability of external economic relations. This direction was taken**

by virtually all the countries of the former socialist camp. A URYADOVYY KURYER correspondent has been briefed about this by Ihor Nikolayko, chief of the Main Department for Issues of External Economic Relations at the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers.

It is understandable that in the near future the leading role will be played by Ukraine's economic relations with CIS countries: Nearly 70 percent of our production is now being exported to markets in this region. Ties with the Russian Federation are remaining a priority in Ukraine's foreign economic relations. Ukraine will continue on its course to settle questions connected with establishing free trade, developing industrial and production cooperation, and creating interstate financial-industrial groups.

The development of relations with the European Union is no less important a priority in Ukraine's foreign economic policy. In further negotiations with the European Union, stress will be laid on facilitating access of Ukrainian commodities to European markets, particularly such important export items as nuclear materials and textiles.

We also must not forget about restoring traditionally effective ties in international specialization and cooperation with former members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Baltic countries. In this case, main attention should be focused on the metallurgy, transport and agricultural machine building, chemical, and light industries. We expect that declarations of free trade with these countries will further the implementation of such plans.

Of course, integration into the global community is impossible without the establishment of fruitful relations with the highly developed countries, particularly the G-7. These states are the most important source of new technologies and high-tech products, as well as the most powerful providers of foreign investments. A particular place among these countries is occupied by the United States. Ukraine's priorities in relations with this country are in the agroindustrial complex, power engineering, space industry, and health care.

Ukraine has since long desired to find an alternative way to ensure supplies of oil and other energy resources. In connection with this, relations with countries of the Persian Gulf region will be considerably deepened in the future. In addition, these countries are the largest reservoir of free-flowing capital, and this is of great importance for us from the viewpoint of attracting investments. Therefore, developing trade and economic cooperation with countries of this region is an immediate task for the government.

The stable presence of domestic commodities on African and Latin American markets may provide a good footing for ensuring Ukraine's national interests in production based on raw materials.

One also cannot omit the fact that cooperation with international economic and financial organizations is an inseparable constituent of the governmental program of reforms and, consequently, of our foreign economic policy. In particular, membership in the GATT/World Trade Organization system is seen as a factor of Ukraine's stable and predictable development. This will allow us to ensure guaranteed access to world markets of commodities and services; this will also be a long-term factor of stability. Due to this, Ukraine will be able to receive, within two years, the sum of $10 billion, which the country badly needs to implement structural reform.

Recently, almost a full liberalization of exports has taken place; this, unfortunately, cannot be said about the efficiency in implementing imports. In 1995, the value of imports in the Ukrainian economy — taking into account only several energy resources and several raw materials — exceeded $7 billion. The main source for covering these expenses is in producing highly attractive commodities for export. The most acute problem now is to ensure an export-import balance as one of the determining factors in exerting influence on the progression of economic transformations.

A negative impact is being made on the above-mentioned processes by the groundlessly open import policy; the access to Ukraine's industrial and consumer markets is too liberal. Due to these circumstances, the government has to implement a flexible import policy by using tariff regulation mechanisms that were developed in the Western world, as well as by introducing import quotas. Otherwise, we may see a collapse of many branches of industrial consumer production, unemployment, and a rise in social tension.

Today Ukraine is suffering from half-legal imports and smuggling of many commodities into its territory, which do not provide any revenues to the budget and exacerbate the situation on the domestic market. In particular, one of the measures to improve the control over this process and prevent losses for the state budget is to introduce excise labels on tobacco products and alcoholic beverages.

The customs policy as a whole needs comprehensive reconsideration. This aspect of foreign economic activity not only aims to defend domestic producers and ensure revenues for the budget, but also remains an important element of the pricing mechanism in the domestic market. It is envisioned that the state will direct considerable efforts to stopping dishonest competition and dumping policies on the part of importers.

The access of Ukrainian enterprises to global markets is a very important step. However, the unpreparedness of specialists creates difficulties, including in obtaining hard currency revenues. These difficulties cannot be overcome solely by instructions and normative documents of the Ukrainian National Bank. In the first place, it is necessary to ensure the unconditional and appropriate execution of functions by all state authoritative bodies.

In conclusion, it must be noted that foreign economic operations are subject to mandatory insurance. It may take the form of banking insurance of hard currency revenues or export factoring — which are widely used in international practice and do not contradict current Ukrainian legislation.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Top Brass Reportedly Resign Over General Lopata Dismissal

LD1702204796 Moscow NTV in Russian
1900 GMT 17 Feb 96

[From the "Segodnya" program by announcer Mikhail Osokin]

[FBIS Translated Text] A scandal in the Ukrainian Armed Forces: There were reports today that five commanders of the Ukrainian General Staff have submitted statements of resignation. They have done this as a sign of support for their former chief. A report from Kiev:

[Unidentified correspondent, over video of military commanders watching maneuvers] The order issued by Supreme Commander in Chief Leonid Kuchma dismissing Colonel General Anatoliy Lopata, chief of Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, aroused a furor among Ukrainian politicians. He had traditionally been considered a bulwark of Ukraine's military-industrial complex, since, as the second most important personality in the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, Lopata advocated preserving a big Ukrainian army on the Soviet model.

The reason for transferring him to another post was this: The chief of the General Staff exceeded his authority by putting to public judgement something that is a state secret.

[Begin recording] [Vladimir Gorbulin, secretary of the National Security Council under the Ukrainian president, interviewed in his office] The chief of General Staff chose a path that in my view is for a military man simply insubordination. [end recording]

[Correspondent] The new concept of restructuring the army, which General Lopata criticized in the press, proposes setting up within a period of 15 years a small mobile army. This proposal takes account of the state's defense sufficiency and economic possibilities. Defene Minister Valeriy Shmarov proceeds from the assumption that neighboring countries present no potential threat to Ukraine.

Ukraine: Moroz Criticizes Presidential Policy

LD1702214196 Moscow INTERFAX in English
2008 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Feb 17 (Interfax - Ukraine) - Ukrainian Parliamentary Chairman Oleksandr Moroz, who also leads the Socialist Party of Ukraine, has called for "changing the anti-people social-economic policy pursued by the authoritarian-bureaucratic presidential regime."

Moroz said at the third general conference of the Socialist Party in Kiev Saturday that the presidential policy was "perilous for the country."

Either the present leadership should be forced to change this policy or the leadership should be removed by constitutional methods, Moroz said.

"An authoritarian anti-state regime" has established itself in the country since the middle of 1995, Moroz said. The presidential regime "pursues an anti-people social-political course," he said.

There are no objective reasons for crises in the country, Moroz said. The crises have stemmed from "the so-called reforms which are artificial and perilous for the state and which lead to loss of Ukraine's independence," he said.

Moroz said he saw official reports that decline in industrial output had slowed down as "mere falsification." These reports show that "the reserve of the decline in industrial output has been exhausted" rather than that the economy has stabilized, he said.

"The policy imposed by international financial structures fails to meet Ukraine's interests," Moroz said. "Further implementation of this policy increases confrontation within the society and exacerbates struggle among the classes, which poses a real threat to Ukraine's national security," he said.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has managed to obtain the conclusion of the so-called constitutional agreement "by pressure, threats and blackmail," Moroz said. The constitutional agreement "has opened the way to large-scale anti-people actions," he said. The incumbents want to cement that agreement by all available means and aim at "preventing the democratic adoption of a democratic constitution," he said.

This explains the confrontation between the president and the Supreme Soviet, Moroz said.

Moroz urged his party "to liquidate the institution of presidency in favor of the parliamentary system."

"The party's strategic policy is to halt the crisis in the society, counteract the offensive by anti-Socialist forces on workers' social achievements and prevent the destruction of the country's productive forces," Moroz said.

Ukraine: Democratic Party Leader Reacts to Moroz Speech

WS2002105396 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0258 GMT 20 Feb 96

[By Oleksandr Pukhov and Oksana Hasiuk, "Special to INTELNEWS"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Feb 19 — A speech made by Parliament Speaker Oleksandr Moroz at a weekend Socialist Party conference means the announcement of open war not only against the president, but also against democracy and an independent Ukraine, Democratic Party leader Volodymyr Yavorivskyy said Monday.

Yavorivskyy said that Moroz' Saturday speech at the nationwide Socialist conference was "not even the signal rocket, but the first shot in this war."

Speaking at the SPU conference on Saturday, Moroz expressed his discontent with existing executive power bodies, saying, "the state bureaucracy amalgamates with a shadow economy and world capital, and together they are destroying the state sector and carrying out uncontrolled privatization at the expense of the people."

Moroz said, "because of internal differences, the Rada is unable to defeat the President and his entourage in their state policy initiatives."

However, the Speaker reconfirmed his belief that the party should continue to support Kuchma because he was the left's choice in the 1994 presidential election.

Yavorivskyy said, that a similar statement is "a very dangerous for instability of Ukrainian society for today."

He also said that activation of left forces in Ukraine is "accompanied by upcoming presidential elections in Russia."

"The Moroz statement wasn't dictated by his personal thoughts, but dictated from the North," said Yavorivskyy, calling for consolidation of parties and movements of centrist and right-centrist orientation.

National-democrats in Parliament's Presidium on Monday also denounced a Moroz statement at the conference that the Socialist Party, which he heads, stands in opposition to an "authoritarian mafia."

But Moroz told Presidium members that he expressed his thoughts in the way he wanted, noting that he gave copies of his speech to 15 "trustworthy newspapers and magazines" and people would have the opportunity to judge his speech for themselves.

Ukraine: Kuchma Confused by Criticism From Moroz

LD1902202896 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1810 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — At a meeting today with the leaders of all 12 Supreme Council deputy groups and factions, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma said he did not understand why Oleksandr Moroz, Supreme Council chairman and head of the Socialist Party of Ukraine [SPU], said what he did at the SPU conference on 17 February. (The necessity of creating a broad left democratic opposition in order to alter the political and economic course of the executive authorities led by the president was expressed at the conference in Oleksandr Moroz's speech, as well as in the conference resolutions — UNIAN)

Ihor Yukhnovskyy, head of the Statehood deputy group, told UNIAN in an interview that "the president said he did not understand why Oleksandr Moroz, who as parliament chairman had signed the constitutional treaty between the president and Supreme Council, could say what he said, and felt hurt that he did." Ihor Yukhnovskyy said that "the president, as well as representatives of right of center factions and groups in parliament, is convinced that such statements appear to undermine the authority of the head of state, especially on the eve of Leonid Kuchma's visit to the United States." The deputy stressed that Oleksandr Moroz's stance could be perceived abroad as political instability in the state, and so would complicate the receipt of credits from international financial organizations.

Ihor Yukhnovskyy stressed that representatives of the rightist forces in parliament agree that Oleksandr Moroz's speech was "a political game, which is inadmissible for the chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Council."

At the same time, Ihor Yukhnovskyy stressed that "Oleksandr Moroz would hardly have made such harsh attacks on the presidential authority without reason."

Representatives of the socialist faction stress that some of the mass media have not reported entirely precisely the content of the speech and Oleksandr Moroz's replies at a news conference, which have evoked a considerable response within society.

Ihor Yukhnovskyy said that the president does not intend to "make statements about this, because this would damage the state." However, Leonid Kuchma proposes that the factions make an assessment of the parliament chairman's actions. The Statehood leader stressed that a certain restructuring of political forces is now under way in the Supreme Council. The creation of a new liberal-inclined Social Market Choice group partly demonstrates this. Therefore, the deputy emphasized that it is impossible to predict the actions of factions and groups in the current situation.

Ukraine: Kuchma on Cooperation Between Executive, Legislature

LD1902215496 Kiev UT-1 Television Network in Ukrainian 1900 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma today met representatives of Supreme Council deputy factions. Their frank discussion focused on cooperation between the executive and legislative branches of power and the role of legislative provision for reform of the national economy.

[Unidentified correspondent] At the meeting, the Ukrainian president drew the attention of the people's deputies to the huge losses borne by the state because of the slow examination of legislative acts, above all economic ones. In particular, he emphasized that tens of important draft laws submitted by the Cabinet of Ministers to parliament in order to implement the government's action program have still not been examined, although accords had been reached on this at a joint session of the Supreme Council and Cabinet of Ministers Presidiums.

The head of state stressed especially that only through concerted efforts and by improving the coordination of the executive and legislative authorities' activities can the legislative provision for reform be substantially improved and the quality of current legislation raised. The Ukrainian president also expressed his stance on the processes going on in the Supreme Council. The course of the constitutional process was also discussed at the meeting, as well as proposals on the mechanism for examining and adopting the draft new constitution, elaboration of which has been completed by the Constitutional Commission's working group.

Ukraine: Kuchma Blames Miners Strike on Russian Miners

LD1602193696 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1530 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Rovno — President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma believes that the miners' strike in Ukraine is a direct consequence of the miners' strike in Russia. "Russian miners called Ukrainian miners to strike, then suspended theirs, but we are now dealing with huge losses as a results of this," the president said today at a meeting with the employees of the Ivano-Dolinskiy basalt special purpose quarry. [passage omitted]

Ukraine: Coal Miners Strike Consequences Reviewed

WS1902095396 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0048 GMT 19 Feb 96

[By Oleh Bohatov]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Coal miners recently suspended their 16-day strike to negotiate with government, but union leaders warned the strike could resume and escalate unless millions of dollars in back wages are paid.

Donetsk strike leader Mykhaylo Krylov said that in case the economic demands are not satisfied, "The next stage of miners' movement will be developed in a Romanian scenario."

In 1992, thousands of angry Romanian miners stormed Romania capital of Bucharest demanding higher wages and better working conditions. That turmoil was popularly credited with precipitating the resignation Petre Roman, Romania's prime minister at the time.

Some Ukrainian trade union bosses have already realized miners' strike alone will not be enough to force the government to fulfill the demands.

"The strike may be only rescued by the all-national strike," said Viktor Derzhak, one coal miners trade union leader.

Such a nationwide strike is being called for Feb. 21, when workers everywhere are being asked by Ukraine's Trade Unions Federation presidium to strike for one hour in support of the miners.

Strike officials said they decided to suspend the strike after Parliament's recent decision to recognize the coal industry as a subsidized sector and to commence payment of KBV30 trillion owed to miners, though miners contend they're owed KBV72 trillion. The government has paid miners KBV 13.5 trillion.

Meanwhile, the nation's power plants are coping with exhausted fuel reserves by cutting power in many areas. Due to insufficient supplies of coal caused by the strike, Donetsk businesses in the engineering complex were completely without electrical power, and the power deficit at the oblast's electric power plants was 500 megawatts.

According to reports from the Ministry of Energy, less than half of the energy blocks at Ukraine's largest thermal electric power plants were operating Feb. 15 because they had depleted their coal reserves.

Communists Push Their Agenda

Communists took advantage of the unrest, speaking at striking rallies urging miners to further condemn the government and show greater solidarity. Communists called for maintaining state subsidies to the ailing industry.

Speaking at the miners' meeting in Donetsk, Communist Party Parliament Deputy Dmytro Petrenko called on miners to join with workers of other basic Ukrainian industries to protest the political-economic course of Ukrainian president, but miners kept their distance characterizing their actions as economic rather than political.

Valeriy Bohatyshchev, deputy chairman of the Independent Miners Trade Union, said his organization would support the nationwide strike in case only economic demands are put forward.

Derzhak rejected an idea of gathering workers' signatures as a sign of non-confidence against the President Leonid Kuchma. This political demand was first put forward at the First Coal Miners' Congress held in Kiev in late 1995.

Ukrainian miners went on strike the same day as did their Russian colleagues, who were striking for more subsidies to coal mining regions as well as payment of back wages, according to Russian media reports.

According to coal industry trade union officials, Russian and Ukrainian miners jointly planned the strike. Yevhen Marchuk, Ukraine's prime minister confirmed the action was coordinated by trade unions in both countries to show their strength to the governments.

In the Beginning

According to strike headquarters, at the moment beginning the strike was called on Feb. 1, a total of 104 mines out of a total of 227 were poised to cease extraction of coal. In addition, 99 other mines intended to work without dispatching coal.

According to trade union officials, some 800,000 miners out of 1 million workers employed in the industry participated on the first day of the strike.

Mykhailo Krylov, co-chairman of Donetsk striking committee expressed confidence at the time, saying that interruption of coal delivery would make government more compliant: "We won't need to strike for a long time," he said.

However, the strike did not have such as strong an impact as organizers hoped. Many mines continued producing coal. For example, mines in Pavlohrad, Krasnoarmeisk, Pervomaisk and Makeyevka resumed operation few hours after the strike was announced.

On Feb. 2, the next day after the strike was launched, Coal Industry Ministry control department on-duty official reported the drop in Ukraine's nightly shift output by only 30 percent, much less than trade unions originally thought.

Some 154,000 tons of coal was extracted during the Feb. 2 night shift, down from an average of 229,000 tons, according to the ministry. Moreover, the amount of daily extracted coal was gradually increasing in a course of two weeks, as many mines were getting back to work, according to the ministry.

According to the trade union headquarters in Donetsk, about 91 mines halted operation by Feb. 2, while another 100 just stopped shipping coal to consumers. One week later, nearly half of striking mines got back to work, while some 44 mines were closed and 71 were not shipping coal to consumers as of Feb. 15, trade unions reported.

However, the Coal Ministry said only 12 mines were shut down as of Feb. 15, while another 15 were not shipping coal. Coal Ministry officials contend some mines were intimidated by trade union bosses and continued to operate, while they reported to the unions they were striking.

"Many mines kept on working while supplying false data to the press to avoid the pressure from trade unions," said Viktor Shchipachev, the ministry official.

Subsidies or Perish

More than 40 mines that had been striking until Feb. 15 are unprofitable and heavily subsidized. Without those subsidies the mines face closing. These mines, situated in central Donbass and in eastern parts of Lugansk and Donetsk oblasts, had been slated recently for privatization by President Leonid Kuchma's decree restructuring coal mines into independent businesses and cutting the state subsidies to inefficient mines.

At the same time, profitable mines in western Donbass were first to quit the strike, according to reports. The mines in western Donbass do not face uncertain future as the government is staking on them in developing domestic coal industry. Three mines of MakeyevUgol, a coal producing association in western Donbass, are expecting to receive state financing to further develop coal production, according to association officials. Mines in Makeyevka resumed operation hours after the strike was announced. [passage omitted]

Strike Bears No Fruit

With the strike suspended analysts say all the parties have lost as a result.

Although the Economics Ministry declined to cite an economic damage done by the strike, it reported that some 10 million tons of coal was not extracted in the first two weeks of February.

The country's power generating plants that use coal as a fuel dropped their output by nearly a half, according to the ministry. Power generating industry lost two power blocks: one in Slavianska and other in Starobeshevka state district electric power plants, which ceased operation due to uneven coal fuel loads, according to local energy department officials.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's metallurgical enterprises may have been better off, having switched to imported coal.

Ukraine: Independent Miners Trade Union Head on TU Split

WS1902120596 Lugansk GOLOS DONBASSA in Russian 9 Feb 96 p 4

["Segment of conversation" with Serhiy Halyautdinov, head of the Ukraine Independent Miners Trade Union, by Tetyana Tkacheva; place and date not given: "We are Following Different Paths"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sometimes numerous miners' trade union behave like objects of Krylov's tale [swan, pike, and crayfish — symbols of uncoordinated efforts]. The Coal Industry Trade Union [CITU] holds a congress and then, an hour later, the Independent Miners Trade Union [IMTU] begins a hunger strike. As a result, we can say that both actions produced no results. Perhaps, everything would be better if there was more unity and solidarity among those who prepare miners for the fight. Actually, why is there this kind of breach between the trade unions which represent people in miners' uniforms? The following segment of a conversation with Serhiy Halyautdinov addresses these issues.

Frankly speaking, he has has evoked a lot of interest for a longtime. There is a lot of gossip and and legends about him. Some people say that he is not very polite to journalists. The truth is that I did not have the occasion to ask him in advance to meet with me. I saw him in the corridor of the amalgamation office; someone said: "This is Halyautdinov." Thus, our conversation began just like that, without the preliminary presentations.

[Tkacheva] Mr. Halyautdinov, how has this situation developed? Why was it necessary to organize the new trade union? Why did you not modernize the existing trade union if it was not good?

[Halyautdinov] In fact, the existing trade union belongs to the structure of the sectoral ministry [Coal Ministry] and was not able to resolve anything and, what is more, to protect miners' rights. From the beginning, the IMTU was the most militant and active organization, particularly our branch in Pervomaysk. Nobody has held more strikes and similar actions than we. Perhaps the Krasnodon organization is the only one that has recently outpaced us.

[Tkacheva] The creation of the independent trade union is connected with the growth of the miners' movement. Do you not think that you, as well as miners in general, have been used by certain structures, which, figuratively speaking, have entered paradise on miners' shoulders? Do the miners really live better lives after six years of fighting? It seems quite the contrary.

[Halyautdinov] I do not agree with you. You have asked about our achievements. Miners are recognized now and their opinions are respected, too. Take me, for instance: I used to work in a coal pit. Who knew me then? Meanwhile, now, not only people at the ministry, but also the prime minister and the president know me personally. After all, to call people on strike or launch some other action is not a problem for the IMTU. Therefore, they respect the trade unions now. Naturally, we understand that we made a lot of mistakes in the past. Sometimes we raised groundless demands for replacing the leading staff, including the "dismissal" of Prorochenko, general manager of the amalgamation. He was dismissed with our help. However, we realized our mistake and asked him to return. He agreed, but under the condition of imposing a moratorium on strikes. It is true that strikes will not lead to anything, and we can act to our disadvantage, given that mines have just started to increase their output.

[Tkacheva] Mr. Halyautdinov, the territorial committee of the Coal Ministry trade union is located in this building a couple of floors lower. They support miners, and the IMTU supports miners. Where does the essential difference between them lie?

[Halyautdinov] Primarily in the organizational system of creating the trade unions. The IMTU's activities can be approved or rejected in the provinces (mines), and this is not considered illegal. The CITU exists within the tough framework of democratic centralization. Primary organizations are subordinated to the higher ones. The IMTU includes only workers, GROZ [expansion unknown], cutters, and the like. We do not accept the engineer-technical personnel in our organization. How would we be able to protect workers from a leadership which oversteps its power if it belonged to our trade union? And the last and most important issue. We are quite determined as to the forms and methods of fighting. It is not only a matter of strikes. The IMTU plays a major role in protecting workers' rights in courts.

[Tkacheva] The CITU has similar examples. The M. V. Frunze Mine of the "Rovenkiantratsyt" production amalgamation was the first to win a recorse suit in court.

[Halyautdinov] Nevertheless, the IMTU will remain firm until many issues are resolved.

[Tkacheva] Very well. Mr. Halyautdinov, why then did the schism within the IMTU itself occur? In particular, why are you, who once occupied the leading post in Ukraine's IMTU leadership, currently only a member of the Donbass IMTU?

[Halyautdinov] There are many reasons behind this, but the primary one lies in the fact that A. Mril [not further identified] has visibly begun to come closer to the organizational structure of the sectoral trade union. As for the IMTU of Donbass, it has managed to preserve the principles of work which are typical of it.[end Halyautdinov]

End of the conversation. I would like to express my personal opinion on the issue addressed in the interview, too. The schism in the IMTU, just as a schism in any trade union, is natural. It happened many times in Russia at the beginning of our century or in the United States in the 1930's. The problem of "white collars" is natural, too. After being elevated from the coal-face to the peaks of power and after "acquiring a taste" for it, people begin to feel somewhat differently. And another aspect. Currently, coal enterprises do not work under the same conditions. However, I doubt that demands for strikes may suddenly appear, for instance, at the third sector of the Vakhrushevo" mine ("Rovenkiantratsyt" amalgamation) or at the "Zolotoye" mine ("Pervomayskugol" amalgamation). It is true that currently those who work well and those who work badly are not paid for produced coal. For the time being, this situation unites the trade unions. However, tomorrow everything may change. Strong mines with strong leadership will remain; however, what will the trade unions (the aforementioned and others) of insolvent mines do? Will their colleagues support them? It is difficult to believe that. This is why it is so important to find the way to unity now.

Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka Reaffirms Commitment to Integration With Russia

LD1902204296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2015 GMT 19 Feb 96

[By Lidiya Peresypkina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, February 19 (ITAR-TASS) — Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka on Monday reaffirmed his commitment to furthering integration with Russia. Lukashenka spoke at a meeting with Russian newspapers' chiefs which focused on his forthcoming Moscow visit and problems of relationship between the media and authorities.

On the eve of the first official Russian visit, Lukashenka said Belarusian policy towards Russia was open, honest and not depending on momentary shifts in the political situation.

"Belarus is able to competently maintain a mutually beneficial dialogue in economy, restoring broken ties and establishing new ones," he said.

In his opinion, Russian-Belarusian relations should elevate to a higher level, "at the initial stage, possibly, to the level of the European Union."

The signing of an agreement on settling mutual claims would not come unexpected as well, the president said. He specified that for Russians, these claims relate to energy supplies, while for Belarusians — to the maintenance of Russian military bases and damage they are causing, as well as to transit through the republic. He said that problems related to elimination of Chernobyl aftermath are also supposed to be on agenda of the visit.

Belarus: Minsk Disputing Right to Uranium From Dismantled Missiles

LD1902220196 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 19 Feb 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Tatyana Mitkova] Now for a problem that is a legacy of implementing the START-1 accord. Belarusian parliamentarians are dissatisfied with Moscow, which deems it unnecessary to pay for the uranium derived from the strategic missiles being withdrawn from the territory of Belarus. In the end, the United States may well become involved in resolving this problem. Aleksandr Stupnikov reports from Minsk.

[Stupnikov, over video of parliament and missile installations] Petr Kravchenko, chairman of the International Affairs Commission of the Belarus parliament, announced the news that Moscow is refusing to pay Minsk hundreds of millions of dollars for the uranium derived from the strategic missiles that are being withdrawn from Belarus. The republic at one time had up to 33 nuclear launch points on its territory; since 1992, Russia has been withdrawing these missiles, including the super-modern SS-25. They are to be dismantled at closed military enterprises such as Arzamas-2. All the reprocessed uranium from Belarus is at present being kept in Russia, without any recompense being made.

[Begin Kravchenko recording] Belarus' right to the uranium from the strategic missiles is currently half-acknowledged, verbally; but there is absolutely no acknowledgement of its right to uranium from the tens and hundreds of tactical missiles that were the first to be withdrawn from the territory of Belarus up to 1 July 1992. [end recording]

[Stupnikov] Under to the START-1 Treaty, the United States should purchase the uranium. The total value of the uranium from the missiles withdrawn from republics of the former Soviet Union amounts to $12 billion. Belarus is being offered only several hundred million dollars, even though its share, according to a number of disputed assessments, is considerably greater. The question of compensation remains open, and this is given that Kiev has already managed to reach agreement on compensation for the uranium, and is receiving nuclear fuel from Russia for Ukrainian nuclear power stations in exchange.

There is also the so-called zero option.

[Begin Kravchenko recording] I think the negotiations should be conducted to the end and a tripartite agreement between Belarus, Russia, and the United States be signed that will untie the Americans' hands to purchase uranium from Russia. Then, given our indebtedness, the nuclear promissory note should be paid off. But the negotiations should be autonomous, independent, and brought to a logical end. [end recording]

[Stupnikov] To judge from all events, the question of the uranium today is not just a matter of price, but also of Moscow's readiness for talks on this topic. It is not ruled out that Belarus' uranium promissory note in exchange for cancelling the debts for Russian energy resources will be Belarus' trump card at the upcoming talks between Moscow and Minsk.

Belarus: Party Questions NATO's Expansion, Existence

WS2002104696 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0740 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Minsk-City Council of the Movement for Democracy, Social Progress and Justice

(DSPJ) has made a statement in which it "shares President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's concern about NATO's plans for expansion eastwards to the border of the Republic of Belarus. The strengthening and expansion of NATO, its enlistment in armed interference in the affairs of other states, as taking place in Bosnia, reveals its aggressive plans representing a real danger for our Republic as well," the statement reads. The DSPJ insists that there is no reason for not only NATO's expansion but also its subsequent existence. The authors of the statement holds that Belarus should put the meeting of its international commitments in the field of disarmament in direct dependence on the curtailment of NATO's activities, and restore defence unity with Russia and other republics of the former Soviet Union.

Belarus: Party Leader on Visit to Iraq, Prospects for Cooperation

WS2002104896 Minsk BELAPAN in English
0740 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On February 19 the Supreme Council of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Belarus (LDPB) discussed the results of the trip of a LDPB delegation to Iraq. As the LDPB chairman, Syarhey Haydukevich, informed a BELAPAN correspondent, during the visit, which was initiated by the Iraqi Party of Arab Socialist Rebirth, the delegation met its representatives who occupy key positions in the Iraqi government — Prime Minister 'Aziz, Vice-President Ramadan, as well as the ministers of information and culture, of trade, of industry, of health and of labour. During these meetings questions concerning cooperation between the parties and the possibility of trade and economic cooperation between Iraq and Belarus were discussed.

Mr Haydukevich holds that the Iraqi nation deserves a better fate than the economic blockade on the part of the world community. That is why the LDPB intends to press for the abolition of economic sanctions against Iraq. According to Mr Haydukevich, the LDPB delegation gathered photo and video evidence of the terrible consequences of the blockade. The Liberal Democrats will make these materials known to large sections of the public in Belarus. Syarhey Haydukevich holds that cooperation with Iraq could open a new market for Belarus, above all for the products of its heavy machine-building industry. Iraq could also interest Belarus as a supplier of cheap oil. The LDPB Supreme Council decided to invite a delegation of the Party of Arab Socialist Rebirth to pay a return visit to Belarus.

Belarus: Lukashenka Announces Intent to Subordinate National Bank

LD1902212896 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1937 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, Feb 19 (FIA-INTERFAX) — Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka told National Bank of Belarus [NBB] officials that he intends to propose to the Supreme Soviet, the Belarusian parliament, that NBB be re-subordinated from parliament to the president.

Lukashenka met with NBB officials on the occasion of the appointment of Tamara Vinnikova as the bank's chairwoman. Previously Vinnikova headed the joint-stock savings bank, Belarusbank.

The president also said that he is prepared to restore order on the financial market, for which he will use all available means.

Belarus: Privatization of Oil Sector Viewed

WS1902120696 Minsk BELORUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA in Russian 12 Feb 96 p 11

[Report by Yuryy Khovrov: "Belnefteprodukt' Begins Denationalization"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] **The "Belnefteprodukt" [Belarusian petroleum products] concern is going to insist that the "Zapadneftegeofizika" [western oil geophysics] scientific-production amalgamation and oil transportation companies be excluded from the list of enterprises exempt from privatization. According to the concern's president Anton Loyka, this proposal has been submitted for discussion by the Supreme Soviet.**

The Zapadneftegeofizika scientific-production amalgamation conducts seismic research of oil fields and prepares the latter for wildcat drilling. The Belnefteprodukt leadership believe that the transformation of the association into a joint stock company will increase its opportunities in acquiring potential customers for its services. In addition, this step should facilitate the attraction of investments.

The amalgamation needs retooling. Some $2.6 million worth of high-tech exploration equipment was purchased in 1995 in France with money provided by the oil industry. There are plans to spend another $2 million to buy software and hardware for the development of a database, and to construct a computer center. The concern's experts believe that $9.7 million should be invested in the amalgamation until the year 2000.

Mr. Loyka believes that the exclusion of the Novopolotsk and Gomel oil transporting enterprises from the list of companies exempt from privatization is necessary, because the trunk pipeline system is a component of a single technological chain. Therefore, an exchange of shares should be conducted with the Russian trunk pipeline joint stock company, which will facilitate the coordination of efforts to ensure safety, replace wornout equipment, and the like. Incidentally, the two Belarusian oil transportation enterprises, too, need tangible investments, given that they were built more than 30 years ago. For instance, their automated control system has to be upgraded. Specialists think that at least $4 million should be annually allocated for this purpose.

Another proposal voiced by the Belnefteprodukt is the abolition of the regulation which envisions that 50 percent of shares of the oil sector are to be handed over to the population in exchange for "Property" privatization vouchers. According to Mr. Loyka, voucher privatization is irrational in industries which need colossal investments. Owners of the "Property" vouchers should be offered to invest them in enterprises which belong to less capital-intensive industries. Taking into account the Belarusian president's attitude toward voucher privatization, it is conceivable that Mr. Loyka will have a strong ally during the resolution of this issue.[passage omitted]

Belarus: Trade Unions May Demand Government's Ouster

WS2002104496 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0740 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On the morning of February 19 representatives of the government and the Association of Independent Industrial Trade Unions of Belarus (AIITUB) continued negotiations to discuss the draft protocol of the meeting between trade union leaders and government officials, including Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir, which took place in the House of Government on February 15. During the negotiations, the AIITUB representatives said why the protocol, which had been signed by the Cabinet of Ministers and the Federation of Trade Unions did not suit the Association, and presented their proposals on the amendment of the protocol.

As Alyaksandr Bukhvostaw, the chairman of the Trade Union of Agricultural Machinery and Motor-Car Construction Workers, informed a BELAPAN correspondent, the AIITUB in particular proposed that Cabinet of Ministers enactment No. 700 instructing enterprises to pay wages in accordance with the state tariff scale should be brought into line with the Labour Code, that the period of withholding export hard-currency proceeds should be extended to 120 days, that the payment of debts to the government's budget and extrabudget funds should be deferred, and that the term of the Enactment "On Some Measures for the Financial Recovery of Enterprises" should be prolonged.

In the AIITUB's opinion, the protocol will be of declarative character if such provisions are not introduced. However, in Mr Bukhvostaw's opinion, even if the protocol is replenished with these provisions, enterprises will hardly have a better chance to improve their financial condition. He does not rule out that the protocol will not be implemented at all as repeatedly happened to not only Cabinet of Ministers enactments but also Presidential Decrees. The leader of the largest industrial trade union in the country, MP Alyaksandr Bukhvostaw, holds that the involvement of trade unions into protracted negotiations with the government may disorganise the performing of trade unions' main function — the protection of workers' rights. He said that if specific results are not produced, trade unions may make political demands, up to the government's resignation.

Moldova

Moldova: Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Meets Dniester Leaders

AU1802212996 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tiraspol, 14/02/1996 (BASApress) — The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry delegation headed by Vice Minister Kostyantyn Hryshchenko met Dniester leader Igor Smirnov and Dniester Supreme Soviet Chairman Grigore Maracuta in Tiraspol today. Hryshchenko stated at a press conference in Tiraspol that the main issue discussed was the clarification of divergences between Chisinau and Tiraspol regarding the conflict solution. He said since many Ukrainians live in Dniester, Ukraine is naturally interested in solving the conflict as soon as possible and improve the economic situation in the region. Dniester President Igor Smirnov told the same conference that Russia and Ukraine can become guarantors of stability in the region. According to Smirnov, Russia comes first followed by Ukraine in Dniester's trade.

Hryshchenko rejected Smirnov's proposal to talk Moldova into joining the CIS customs union since Ukraine itself is not member of the union. At a recent press conference, Moldovan Foreign Minister Mihai Popov stated "Ukrainian blue-helmets might be included in the peacekeeping troops, the possible ways of financing being currently discussed." Kostyantyn Hryshchenko will meet Chisinau officials tomorrow and will conclude his visit in Moldova.

Moldova: Ukrainian Official Offers Help in Dniester Conflict

AU1902213596 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 1930 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, February 15 (INFOTAG) — Ukraine is ready to render its assistance in solving the Dniester problem in a form which would be convenient for all sides, Mr. Hryshchenko [Ukrainian deputy minister of foreign affairs] stated at today's press conference in Chisinau. According to him, search for such forms was one of the key topics of his three day visit to Moldova. The Ukrainian diplomat failed to name any concrete variants, and only remarked that negotiations on the issue are yet to be continued.

He does not rule out a possibility of bringing Ukrainian peacekeepers into Dniester, but only upon both side's consent and approval of the Supreme Rada (Ukrainian Parliament).

Kiev does not mind attracting Romania as a mediator in the talks in case all involved sides consider such a variant as useful, the deputy minister said.

Among other issues, Moldovan officials and Constantin Grishenko discussed delimitation and demarcation of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border, and the position of the Ukrainian ethnic minority in Moldova.

He stated at the press conference today that the sides have no disputes concerning border delimitation and demarcation, but some border portions are fairly complicated to agree upon, in particular near the Jurjulesti village on the Danube.

When your correspondent asked the guest why the Supreme Rada is reluctant to ratify the basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, Hryshchenko said this is rather a question for Rada deputies, but offered a supposition that the delay is due to uncertainties in border and property problems.

Ukraine and Moldova are negotiating establishment of a bilateral Customs Union. They exchanged their declarations on the issue, and the documents were sent to appropriate ministries for consideration. This question will be further discussed during the soon-to-be visit of a high-level Moldovan governmental delegation to Kiev to be headed by Prime Minister Andrei Sangheli.

Answering INFOTAG's question about the Ukrainian-Romanian dispute around the Zmeiny [Serpents Island] island in the Black sea, and a possibility to invite Moldova to mediate, the Deputy Minister replied, "there is no dispute: According to international agreements, the island is a Ukrainian territory, and there is no necessity in a mediation."

Moldova: Ambassador Calls For 'Courageous Caution' Toward Russia

AU2002101696 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, 16/02/1996 (BASA-press) — "I think we can barely afford neglecting the possibility, not at all illusory, that Russia will reassert itself as a superpower," Valeriu Pasat, Moldovan Ambassador in Moscow, told the weekly SAPTAMANA (THE WEEK). To his mind, "in the relations with Moscow, Chisinau should always show a cautious courage and a courageous caution... With little forces, but working tenfold, we should tenaciously pursue the goal to assert ourselves in our relations with Moscow as an independent and sovereign country," said Pasat. According to him, the current stage of Moldovan-Russian relations may be viewed as "the stage of contemplating the created situation. Both Russia and Moldova still attempt to fully realize their own national interests, analyze the prospects of solving problems, taking into account their own interests in the first place, and only afterward they recall of the other side's interests." This "inevitably leads to political distortions and tense relations," noted Pasat. In his opinion, "it is inadmissible that state interests, Moldovan territorial integrity become trump cards in political games during the Russian electoral campaign." On the other hand, "it is inadmissible when our attitude toward Russia and our policy regarding Russia are changing with the regularity of changes of ruling parties," concluded Pasat.

Moldova: Communists Oppose Compromise on Language Issue

AU1902202796 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, 14/02/1996 (BASA-press) — Many extraparliamentary right-wing parties have reprobated the Parliament's rejection of President Snegur's initiative to change official language name, while leftist parties have approved of the majority's decision. In a statement issued yesterday, the Christian Democratic Youth Organization called the rejection "a historical lie raised to the constitutional level."

Vlad Darie, head of the Moldovan Liberal Party executive board, told BASA-press that the way this problem was addressed in Parliament points to "the ruling party's agony. Just like Gorbachev caught at the illusive idea of the human-faced socialism, the PDAM [Agrarian Democratic Party of Moldova] hangs on to the idea of the existence of two languages," said Darie. He also said the PDAM loses its ideological ground, and people's confidence is continuously dropping, which proves that the parliament decision concerning the official language name is not a final one.

Vladimir Voronin, first secretary of the Moldovan Communist Party (PCM), told BASA-press that the Parliament's decision coincides with PCM's political options. "The PCM pleaded for the name of Moldovan language and people, and besides the scientific arguments there are also arguments of political and rational character," said Voronin. Referring to the way Parliament addressed this problem, Voronin said he was "unpleasantly impressed by Speaker Lucinschi's duplicity," adding "the language cannot be half-Romanian and half-Moldovan."

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev Comments on Russian Presidential Campaign

LD1702001196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 0004 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 16 (INTERFAX) — President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan said on Friday he would respect the outcome of June's presidential election in Russia whatever it may be and argued that his current Russian counterpart, Boris Yeltsin, stood a fair chance to win the poll.

"As president of Kazakhstan I will respect the choice of the people of Russia, whatever the outcome of the forthcoming election for the post of its head is," Nazarbayev told Interfax.

He said Yeltsin's chances to win the vote were "not bad, because the people are wise and must realize who the true guarantor is of the constitution and democracy."

Since Yeltsin promises than pussian peformn pre irreversible ann phat he will remain guarantor of the constitution, "I would support him as leader of the Russians," the Kazakh president said.

He said he would "make every effort for Kazakhstan to remain, as it is now, the calmest member state of the Commonwealth of Independent States."

He said ethnic Russians accounted for 30 percent of his country's population, t0 percent being ethnic Kazakhs and the remainder being made up of people of 120 other ethnic groups.

Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev Proposes Drafting of CIS Integration Program

LD1602195696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1647 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 16 (INTERFAX) — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has proposed that the CIS countries begin drafting a program entitled "Integration-2000" in the spring of 1996.

Nazarbayev introduced his initiative at a joint session between Russia's Academy of Social Sciences, the Eurasia international organization, the Realist club and several other public organizations in Moscow Friday.

Nazarbayev said some aspects of his program to form the Eurasian union on ex-USSR territory proposed in October 1994 had been implemented within such CIS institutions as the payment and customs union and in the development of regional relations.

However, taking into consideration the different pace of reforms and the "different political landscape," the integration process is now unlikely to cover all former Soviet republics at once, Nazarbayev said. The integration process should be carried out at two speeds and on many levels whereby firstly the countries who are rather close in terms of reforms and living standards will unite, he said.

Nazarbayev said he saw Russia as the leader and the center of integration.

Nazarbayev said that during his two meetings with Russian President Boris Yeltsin last year, an agreement was reached to develop the economic and humanitarian integration between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. It was decided to begin drawing up a payment union between these countries with introduction of a unified currency, legal and transport unions and to begin creating an interparliamentary committee and a council of the heads of state as executive organs, he said.

If the three former Soviet republics manage to resolve these issues in March, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and some Transcaucasian countries may join them, Nazarbayev said. This union may be named a Eurasian union and be the first stage of the creation of a real Eurasian union, he said.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan: President Akayev Addresses Parliament

LD1702212896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1012 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bishkek, 17 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev said at the second Kurultay (forum) [parliament] of the people of the republic, which opened here today, that the problem of achieving interethnic and interreligious agreement was of universal human significance. The Kurultay seeks to improve the policy of interethnic relations in the country and work out a new package of measures aimed at consolidating civil peace and stability there.

The president expressed the hope in his address that in the near future the members of parliament will lay down in the Constitution the status of Russian language as an official language in Kyrgyzstan. Akayev welcomed the activities of the assembly of the peoples of the republic, which was set up at the first Kurultay (January 1994) — a public organization, embracing all the national and cultural centers of the country. In a move to enhance the assembly's role in society, Akayev has issued instructions to prepare a decree on state support for the assembly.

President Akayev also believes that the development of local self-government will be a reliable tool in conducting a national policy that will take into consideration all the ethnic groups and entities. With the help of the people, he is going to declare war on the destruction in the republic and the squandering of public property and resources. To solve these problems, a five-year program of mobilization works is currently being drawn up, which will specify tasks by years and list authorities and other organizations to carry out reconstruction work.

Kyrgyzstan: Government To Resign Shortly Over Constitutional Changes

*LD1902111396 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1023 GMT 19 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BISHKEK, Feb 19 (INTERFAX) — The Kyrgyz government will resign within the next few days following a nationwide referendum that approved a number of radical changes to the constitution, presidential press secretary Kamil Bayalinov said at a press briefing on Monday.

He said President Askar Akayev will issue a decree authorizing the present government to carry on until a new government is formed.

"Incumbent prime minister Apas Dzhumagulov is likely to remain" in charge of the new government, since the president has repeatedly confirmed his intention to work with him, Bayalinov said.

The press secretary noted that "there will be serious changes" in the new government to be appointed by the president, and its composition will be announced at the end of February.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Nazarov Outlines Proposals for Ashgabat Talks

*LD1602203796 Moscow Mayak Radio Network
in Russian 1630 GMT 16 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] A one-day recess has been taken at the inter-Tajik talks in Ashgabat. Our correspondent Mergen Amanov has the details:

[Begin recording] [Amanov] In the absence of Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, the UN secretary general's special envoy, the talks did not stop and proposals for a cease-fire and the cessation of combat operations, in particular in the Tavildara area, for a reinforcement of UN points of control, and for an exchange of prisoners were submitted to the joint Tajik opposition.

Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarovich Nazarov, the head of the government delegation, has just now returned from Dushanbe. Talbak Nazarovich, what proposals have you brought with you?

[Nazarov] We regard the opposition's proposal to set up a council of national reconciliation as unconstitutional. We believe that this council, as the authors conceive it, as it were replaces the legitimately elected parliament, which we do not accept. I believe that, for a start, it will be necessary to proceed along the path of creating a forum of the peoples of Tajikistan. This will be the first protocol and will be a considerable step forward. Second, we of course will support the proposal for a cease-fire, say, for six months, so that during this time we will have the possibility to do some work and find some more constructive methods of approach.

[Amanov] Talbak Nazarovich, your view on a variant for the settlement of the conflict, I have in mind the UN variant, and at the same time, your proposals in this connection.

[Nazarov] To a considerable extent we will support the UN proposal — we find that they are working constructively there. As regards a coalition government, a national reconciliation council, etc, we have already heard all about that. We are not inclined under any circumstances to go outside the framework of the existing laws and the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, and I also go along with the documents that we previously signed with the opposition. In the protocol of 17 August 1995, it says clearly that the regulation of all questions should occur within the framework of the existing laws of the Republic of Tajikistan.

[Amanov] Talbak Nazarovich, are your proposals for convening a forum that you mentioned, the forum of the peoples of Tajikistan, still valid?

[Nazarov] Absolutely, they remain in force. They remain in force, we are not abandoning this proposal. We believe that will be a substantial step for resolving a number of other questions. [end recording]

Tajikistan: Russian Commander on 'Futile' Border Provocations

*LD1802130396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1115 GMT 18 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, February 18 (ITAR-TASS) — In an exclusive interview with Itar-Tass here on Sunday, Lieutenant- General Pavel Tarasenko, commander of Russian border troops in Tajikistan, called as "futile and dangerous" provocations by the armed opposition on the Tajik-Afghan border.

The general pointed to unending firing and shelling on Russian border posts at various directions, above all the Shuroabad area where the Moskovskiy borde detachment is deployed, as one of destabilising factors on the border.

Armed groups continue attempts to break through the border at the Kalaykhumskiy, Khorog and Pyanj sections, the aim of which is to smuggle weapons, narcotics as well as to reinforce anti-government groups inside the republic with reserves from opposition bases situated in border areas of Afghanistan.

According to Tarasenko, the command of Russian border troops is concerned over information on continued movements of armed opposition groups from the Afghan hinterland to the border.

"For instance, between 500 and 600 armed people massed opposite the Pyanj border detachment in the Afghan border area, between 250- 300 — in the Shuroabad district and about 100 armed people - opposite the Kalaykhumskiy border detachment. There is also information about other sections of the Tajik-Afghan border," the general noted.

In Tarasenko's opinion, the aim of such concentrations is attempts at new breakthroughs and a stake on changing the existing system in the republic by force.

At the same time, he pointed to futility of any attempts to settle the inter-Tajik problem by force, stressing that problems can be settled at the negotiating table by mutual compromises and more active participation of the United Nations in this process.

Tajikistan: Dushanbe, Opposition Fail To Agree to Cease-Fire Extension

LD1702205596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2043 GMT 17 Feb 96

[By Anna Kurbanova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ASHGABAT, February 17 (ITAR-TASS) — The Tajik government and the opposition failed on Saturday to agree the terms of extension of a ceasefire agreement expiring on February 26.

The agreement is the main condition for the continuation of the U.N.-mediated talks.

The opposition said it would agree to extend the agreement until May 26, 1996 if both sides exchange 150 prisoners of war by March 15, 1996.

Another condition put forward by the opposition is that the parties' forces remain on their present positions near the villages of Dashti Sher and Khur in the Tavil-Dara region and the Vanch district.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan: Niyazov Voices Support for Partnership With Russia

LD1902182296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1640 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ASHGABAT, February 19 (ITAR-TASS) — President Saparmurad Niyazov of Turkmenistan on Monday voiced up his commitment to continuous partnership with Russia. Russia will always remain Turkmenistan's strategic partner whatever turn the situation may take, he said.

Speaking to the Russian press on the occasion of the National Flag Day, he said Turkmenistan is "open to mutually beneficial and extensive cooperation with Russia on a parity basis." He said cooperation in oil-and-gas and transportation sectors, as well as interaction on the Caspian Sea will remain the priorities of bilateral relations.

Touching upon recent recognition by the world community of Turkmenistan's "permanent neutrality," Niyazov stressed the importance of this principle for an independent state.

"Our neutrality does not aim against anybody. And we have never done and will never do anything to the detriment of the others," he stressed.

Turkmenistan: Foreign Minister Comments on Caspian Sea Issues

LD1802161296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1319 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ASHGABAT, Feb 18 (INTERFAX) — Turkmenistan is in favor of convening a conference between the heads of state of the countries bordering the Caspian Sea in order to resolve problems regarding the sea, Turkmen Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov told reporters in Ashgabat, the Turkmen capital, on February 17.

The Caspian issue should be considered by the foreign ministers of the littoral countries in Ashgabat in the near future, Shikhmuradov said. "It is desirable that this meeting prepare a Caspian summit," he said.

Turkmenistan believes that the Caspian Sea is "a common sea for all countries surrounding it," Shikhmuradov said. All problems concerning the Caspian Sea should be resolved taking into consideration the interests of the littoral countries, he said. "Adoption of any one-sided decisions may trigger rather undesirable situations," he said.

The Caspian Sea "is a unique and very fragile biological, mineral and environmental system," Shikhmuradov said.

"It is necessary to take into consideration this fragility when seeking profits from activity in the Caspian Sea," he said.

Every littoral country in the Caspian Sea should have a territorial and economic zone of between 20 and 40 nautical miles, Shikhmuradov said. He said the remaining water area should be a zone of free navigation and joint decision-making.

Given the present political reality, it is hopeless to try to resolve the Caspian issue without taking into consideration the interests of all littoral countries, Shikhmuradov said.

Turkmenistan is glad that Iran and Russia share this position, he said.

Shikhmuradov said he hoped that "reason will get the upper hand and those who now insist on dividing the Caspian into national sectors will change their position."

"Turkmenistan is against any military activity" in the Caspian Sea and "will sharply speak out against attempts to transform it into a theater of naval combat," Shikhmuradov said.

Turkmenistan: 'Landmark' Oil Deals Signed With Six Western Firms

LD1702163996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1503 GMT 17 Feb 96

[By Anna Kurbanova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ASHGABAT, February 17 (ITAR-TASS) — Six Western companies signed on Saturday three landmark investment contracts with Turkmenistan's government to modernise an oil refinery in the city of Turkmenbashi.

Turkmen Minister of Oil and Gas Amangedly Esenov told Itar-Tass that the modernisation of the oil refinery is one of the priority areas to be pursued by the national oil and gas industry in the years to come.

The refinery, built during World War II, cannot operate at a projected capacity of six million tonnes of oil annually and has to reduce the production of light oil products because of the failing equipment.

Last October, the government announced a contest to modernise the refinery which involved 15 foreign companies. The winners — the Japanese companies Chioda and Nichimen and the Turkish company Gamma — will cover all the expenses under the project valued at 125 million U.S. dollars.

A new plant they will install will allow the refinery to increase the production of high-octane petrol by 2.5 times. The plant is capable of producing 750,000 to one million metric tonnes of petrol annually.

Other contenders were invited to take part in the construction of a catalytic cracking plant and an oil plant at the same oil refinery on condition that they bear all expenses.

On Saturday, the government signed two more contracts to this effect.

The German company Mannesmann will build a plant to make 80,000 tonnes of lubricating and other oils annually. The project is estimated at 165 million U.S. dollars.

The other project — a catalytic cracking plant — valued at 176 million U.S. dollars will be carried out by a consortium set up by the Iranian state oil company and the French company Technip. The plant will produce 1.8 million tonnes of oil products a year.

The implementation of these contracts will substantially modernise the republic's oil industry and create a modern oil refinery which is expected to reach the projected level of production in 1999 when Turkmenistan plans to start paying off debts to its partners.

Turkmenistan: Oil Boss Blames Western Firms for Shortfall in Production

LD1802205296 Tashkent BIZNES-VESTNIK VOSTOKA in Russian 16-22 Feb 96 p 23

[FBIS Translated Text] The republic today prefers investors from the CIS. The large Koturdepe oil and gas deposit, in western Turkmenistan, which provides more than half of the oil extracted in the [Balkan] Region (in the northern part), is in thrall to the flood waters of the Caspian Sea. According to Amangeldy Kulniyazov, the chairman of the Balkannebitgazsenagat [Balkan oil and gas industry] concern, more than 40 wells in the coastal area in Komsomolsk [placename as published] are in the flood zone. Measures to counter the problem have already been planned: A huge dam with total length of 10 km is supposed to appear by spring 1996. The Russian Zarubezhtransstroy [foreign transport construction] trust is undertaking its construction, which will cost $16.6 million, on a contractual basis.

The most anxiety is caused by the rise in the water level in the area of the compressor station in Koturdepe, which, incidentally, has exhausted its service life. A new compressor station is supposed to be built in the area between Koturdepe and Barsa-Kelmes [placename as published]. Under an intergovernmental agreement, the mechanical engineering plant in Sumy [Ukraine] is to implement the above project. In this way Ukraine could, at least partially, repay its debt to Turkmenistan for gas supplied. However, as the regional newspaper BALKAN says, the construction of the compressor station has not yet started: it has been put off indefinitely because of lack of funds.

The pace of growth in extraction by Balkannebitgazsenagat in the first 11 months of 1995 was 0.5 percent, which is 19,200 tonnes more than in same period in 1994. Deep drilling is being carried out at such promising sites as Garashsyz, Tyagedepe, and Igdelyar. According to the report for the concern, the control indicators have been exceeded, but the sector as a whole is lagging behind the indicators laid down in President Niyazov's policy document "On accelerated development of the oil and gas industry up to 2020."

A fair share of the blame for this lies with joint ventures, Mr. Kulniyazov thinks. The first experience of joint ventures in oil extraction with the Argentine Keymir and Dutch Larmag [names as published] companies was not very effective. (Keymir is developing resources at the eponymous Keymir deposit and Larmag-Cheleken is operating in the area of the Caspian Sea waters, at the Lam, Zhdanovo, and Prichelekenskiy Kupol deposits.) According to preliminary calculations, last year alone they were around 500,000 tonnes of oil in arrears. The joint venture with the Dutch, Larmag-Cheleken, was especially bad. The Turkmen-Dutch joint venture has not drilled a single well since it started operating. As a result, the industry is about 700,000 tonnes of oil short for this period. According to A. Kulniyazov, this leads one to think that it is better to count mainly on one's own reserves and to seek business partners in CIS countries.

As it has turned out, the concern, using its own resources, completed prospecting work and provided the infrastructure for the major oil and gas-condensate deposit at Korpedzhe in "record time" (six months). Daily extraction of oil at the deposit has increased by 800 tonnes in the past few months. This has been achieved without drilling new extraction wells, but by commissioning new deposits at Yuzhnaya Gamyshlydzha and Korpedzhe.

Turkmenistan: Government Aims To Create Attractive Investment Climate

LD1702214996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2008 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ASHGABAT, Feb 17 (INTERFAX) — Turkmen Deputy Prime Minister Boris Shikhmuradov has said that Turkmenistan should create an attractive investment climate in 1996.

A serious move to attain this goal will be to stabilize the manat, national currency, and achieve its convertibility, Shikhmuradov told Russian reporters in Ashgabat, the Turkmen capital, Saturday. The currency exchange network is expected to begin working on March 15, he said, adding that from this date the manat is to become convertible.

The country will "rejuvenate economic legislation within a short period in order to create an attractive investment climate," Shikhmuradov said. New laws will be aimed at protecting investments in the national economy, he said.

The Turkmen leadership has worked out a program to develop the banking system, including the opening of foreign banks' affiliates, Shikhmuradov said. Russian, Turkish and Iranian banks have already opened affiliates in Turkmenistan, he said, adding that the number of foreign banks' subsidiaries in the country will rise.

In 1996 Turkmenistan will also implement the program to create free economic zones, Shikhmuradov said. The first zone of the kind will be set up in southern Turkmenistan near the border with Iran, where the two countries' railroad networks are expected to be connected in May, he said. The Turkmen leadership is now also considering the possibility of transforming Ashgabat into a free trade zone, he said.

Regarding the economic situation in the country, Shikhmuradov also said that it was necessary to fill the domestic market with both Turkmen-made and imported products. To develop production, new facilities in the agricultural- industrial complex and the textile industry will be put on line in the near future, he said.

Shikhmuradov reiterated the Turkmen leadership's position, saying that "economic reforms in the country will be implemented so that not to allow the population's living standards to decrease." Earlier on Saturday, Turkmen President Saparmurad Niyazov confirmed this position.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan: Karimov Says Yeltsin Only Alternative to Communists

LD1602233496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2222 GMT 16 Feb 6

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Uzbekistan hails Boris Yeltsin's decision to seek re-election not because he is attractive, but because he can alone confront the Russian Communists, President Islam Karimov told a news conference of Russian journalists on Friday who are there to examine local reforms.

He made it clear he did not mean Yeltsin as a personality but the triumph of democracy as a whole.

On the internal situation, Karimov said the political process was in the making. He named "traditions, national specifics and mentality, history and culture in a combination with the world civilization" among the main principles of the country's statehood.

On religion, he said it must be separated from the state adding that "the Iranian road is unacceptable to us."

On the country's economic performance, the president is committed to achieve internal convertibility of the national currency this year. But for this to happen, he said, a foreign exchange reserve is being built up at the cost of foreign earnings from exports of cotton, gold and other products manufactured by export-oriented businesses whose profit tax is halved as an incentive.

Karimov said the revenue and expenditure parts of the 1996 budget was set at 142.197 billion sum and 155.621 billion sum respectively, with the budget deficit running at 3.5 percent of the country's GDP or 13.424 billion sum.

He said the budget has retained its social thrust. 37 percent of government spending is intended for education, health and culture and 13.4 percent for social security needs compared with 35.4 percent and 9.6 percent in 1995.

The defense bill was set at 4.4 percent or 6.8 billion sum of the budget spending.

Budget revenues are to be made up of 25 percent profit tax, 22 percent excise duty and 10.8 percent income tax.

Karimov said 3.6 billion sum is to be allocated to clear the government debt to private depositors, half of this sum to be extended from the state budget and the other half from non-budgetary sources.

On regional security, the president expressed satisfaction that Tashkent's proposal to impose an arms embargo on Afghanistan was reflected in a resolution by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He pledged commitment not to allow any weapons to be shipped via Uzbekistan's territory.

Armenia

Armenia: Russia's Pastukhov Arrives To Discuss Karabakh Problem

LD1702213496 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 17 Feb 96

[Video report by correspondent Vladimir Nazaryan, including recorded comments by Boris Pastukhov, Russian first deputy foreign minister; from the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Boris Pastukhov, new first deputy foreign minister, arrived in Yerevan today. Our correspondent telephoned the editor's office in the morning to say that it was expected that new approaches to the settlement of the Karabakh problem will be discussed. And we have just received his report.

[Nazaryan] Soon it will be the second anniversary of the ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh. The negotiating process aimed at reaching a peace settlement to the conflict has been going on all that time in the framework of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk group, however, the final solution of the Karabakh problem has still not been found.

A visit to Yerevan by Boris Pastukhov, the first deputy foreign minister of the Russian Federation, should clarify the situation, particularly in the light of Russia's latest proposals. Even more so since the visit is being perceived by observers as the first stage in the implementation of the shuttle diplomacy put forward by President Yeltsin as a means of resolving peacefully the longest-ever regional conflict.

[Pastukhov] We will be working out a recipe together. On the other hand, I will not conceal the fact that we have a whole number of ideas and proposals that we will discuss both here and Baku.

[Nazaryan] Immediately from the airport Boris Pastukhov went to the residence of the Armenian president where he had a lengthy meeting with Levon Ter-Petrosyan.

It is expected that Pastukhov will also meet Robert Kocharyan, the president of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, who will arrive in Yerevan late tonight.

Armenia: Tehran To Take More Mediatory Steps in Karabakh Conflict

LD1602235196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2241 GMT 16 Feb 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, Feb 16 (INTERFAX) — Iran will take more mediatory steps in a bid to bring about a settlement of the Karabakh conflict "if it feels they are necessary," the Iranian ambassador to Armenia Hamid-Reza Nik-kar Esfahani has said.

The ambassador said he was satisfied with the prolonged truce in the area of the conflict. "This gives certain hope," the Iranian ambassador said.

He has the impression that the "mediators in the peace talks have not cleared up all matters yet." In his opinion eliminating that uncertainty would help achieve tangible progress in the negotiations.

About the Chechen problem the ambassador said that Iran regarded it as an internal affair of Russia to be settled by the Russian authorities.

He said that relations with Russia were a priority for Teheran and relied on mutual respect.

Armenia: Karabakh Accuses Azerbaijanis of 'Diplomatic Blackmail'

NC1602160496 Yerevan SNARK in English 0600 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Stepanakert, February 16 (SNARK)—Today the NKR [Nagorno-Karabakh Republic] Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a statement regarding a statement released by Azerbaijan's representative in the session of the OSCE Permanent Council on February 8.

The NKR-made statement says that the Azeri statement violates both the ethics of the negotiation process conducting as part of the OSCE Minsk group and undermines the peaceful initiatives towards which the Azeri party shows no interest.

Similar actions guided by Azeri leaders can not promote to settle the conflict and to achieve lasting peace in the region.

The Azeri statement contradicts the OSCE basic documents related to ways of the resolution to the Karabakh conflict. Groundless accusations against the NKR leaders are insulting for the Minsk process member countries that have been negotiating with NKR authorities for several years. The statement qualifies Azerbaijan's position as diplomatic blackmail and political trade.

NKR leaders are striving to reach a political settlement of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Karabakh. This was the reason for NKR President's visit to the United States where he met congressmen, senators and UN Deputy Secretary General Aldo Ayello.

The Foreign Ministry of Karabakh draws attention of all parties concerned and member countries of the OSCE Minsk process to the statement and the policy pursued by Azerbaijan that undermine patched-up negotiation process and aim to hamper the NKR leaders to actively participate in search of a peace solution to the Karabakh conflict.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Aliyev, Gasanov Receive Russian Deputy Foreign Minister

NC1902203396 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1700 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev today received Boris Pastukhov, the first deputy foreign minister of Russia. Views were exchanged on ways of resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Gasan Gasanov also received Boris Pastukhov. Views were exchanged on matters of interest to them.

Azerbaijan: Baku Laying Hopes on Moscow for Karabakh Settlement

LD1902191296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1553 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, Feb 19 (INTERFAX) — Recent statements by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on a settlement in Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region made at the end of last month's CIS summit in Moscow "instill great hopes in Azerbaijan," President Geydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan told visiting First Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Boris Pastukhov in Baku on Monday.

Aliyev said this month marks exactly eight years since the outbreak of the regional conflict, a period long enough for the forces "who unleashed it in the hope of weaning away Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan" to realize this was impossible to achieve.

For his part, Pastukhov said although the regional cease-fire was holding, the process of a negotiated settlement "has been unduly delayed." He said his visit was the first step in the framework of shuttle diplomacy President Yeltsin spoke about at the Moscow CIS summit a month ago.

Pastukhov stressed Russia was determined to give a greater push to the negotiating process, though still attaching great importance to OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] efforts to bring a negotiated settlement to the Karabakh problem.

He said the issue would dominate the agenda of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov's talks with OSCE Chairman Flavio Cotti in Moscow on Tuesday.

The Russian diplomat spoke of a series of new actions Moscow was planning to initiate soon as part of its international efforts.

He said everything now hinged on the flexibility of the parties in the conflict and their willingness to resolve the controversial issues.

Pastukhov spoke of Russia's active involvement in the peace process and its optimistic view of the future.

The rest of the meeting was held in private.

The minister is accompanied by Vladimir Kazimirov, Russian envoy for Nagorno-Karabakh and representative for the Russian co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk conference for the disputed territory.

Azerbaijan: Accord on Transport of Early Oil via Russia

NC1602183096 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1700 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A ceremony was held at the presidential offices on 16 February during which documents were signed on transporting early Azerbaijani oil via Russia. Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev was present during the signing ceremony. He also addressed the gathering.

Azerbaijan: State Oil Company, Lukoil Sign Agreement on Shahdeniz

NC1902211796 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1700 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President of the Azerbaijani State Oil Company Natiq Aliyev and President of the Russian Lukoil Company Vahid Alekberov have signed a memorandum on a mutual agreement. With this document, Lukoil company gains the right to prospect at Shahdeniz and to be included in the third consortium to exploit it. Natiq Aliyev announced that the amount of Lukoil's share will be determined within a month after consultations under his leadership.

Azerbaijan: Opposition Objects To Deploying Russian Guards at Border

LD1702202996 Tehran IRNA in English 1853 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Astara, Gilan Prov., Feb. 17, IRNA — The Azeri opposition has strongly objected to the proposal on the deployment of Russian guards on Azerbaijan's border with Iran and Turkey, the opposition's freedom radio said on Saturday.

In a statement, the Popular Front of Azerbaijan (PFA) said that accepting the Russian deployment on Azeri southern borders would prepare grounds for gradual exercise of influence and domineering of foreign power over the republic.

The statement said it would object any move by Azeri Government to accept the deployment proposal.

Meanwhile, leader of National Independence Party of Azerbaijan Republic (Istiklal), Etibar Mamedov, has described the deployment of Russian troops on southern borders of the republic as contrary to Azerbaijan's constitution.

Leader of Muslim Democratic Party (Musavat), Isa Gambarov, said his party would oppose the entry of Russian troops on the Azeri soil.

Georgia

Georgia: Shevardnadze on Yeltsin's Re-Election Bid

LD1802120396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0929 GMT 18 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Tengiz Pachkoria]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, February 18 (ITAR-TASS) — Stating his intention to run for the second term at the presidential elections in Russia, Boris Yeltsin "took the only correct decision in the present situation", said Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze as quoted by his press secretary Vakhtang Abashidze in an interview with Itar-Tass here on Sunday.

"I would have acted in the same way in his shoes," Shevardnadze added.

In the Gerogian president's opinion, Russia needs stability as well continuity, and Yeltsin is guarantor of this stability.

Shevardadze believes that "if Boris Yeltsin preserves his present form, he will win the elections in Russia next June".

Georgia: Shevardnadze Hopes Russia Can Help Abkhaz Settlement

LD1802204696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1535 GMT 18 Feb 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Tengiz Pachkoriya]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 18 Feb (ITAR-TASS) — A statement by the Russian defense minister is "unbiased and fair. It will help speed up the process of political settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia". This is how Eduard Shevardnadze assessed the statement on settling the conflict in Abkhazia, which was recently made by Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, the press secretary of the Georgian president said today. Shevardnadze believes that the Russian minister's statement and Russia's other actions can help speed up the settlement of the Abkhazian-Georgian conflict.

Last Thursday [15 February] the Russian defense minister said at the second congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of Workers and Office Staff that if the Abkhazian and the Georgian sides fail to agree soon on how to settle the conflict, the Russian defense minister intends to propose to the president and to the Federation Council that the Russian peacekeeping forces should be withdrawn from Abkhazia. The minister believes that there is no point in keeping the peacekeepers there in the present conditions when both sides are failing to agree on the issue of settlement. "The authorities there can no longer be kept in power by Russian bayonets," Grachev said.

Georgia: Shevardnadze Weekly Interview

LD1902153696 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0610 GMT 19 Feb 96

[Interview with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze by correspondent Nato Oniani — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt]

[Oniani] Good morning. Here is a radio interview with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.

Last week was very interesting from the economic point of view and saw several important developments. [passage omitted] Last week you met with a delegation from the Siemens company, a delegation of Uzbek experts, and the British co-founder of the Anglo-Georgian oil company. [passage omitted]

Apart from all that, last week an IMF representative described our budget as the best budget in the former Soviet republics. Nevertheless, international economic structures have set two necessary conditions for the allocation of credit: the adoption of laws on the ownership of arable land and on the operation of commercial banks. [passage omitted]

[Shevardnadze] [passage omitted] Last week, a government meeting chaired by the president examined a number of draft laws of fundamental importance for solving tasks relating to the democratization of public life, establishment of the market economy, and the revival of Georgian statehood in general. I believe that after the Constitution, the main guarantor ensuring that public life is organized according to the standards of modern civilization is the civil code of Georgia, a draft of which is to be presented to parliament by the Georgian president. A special commission led by Sergo Jorbenadze, the well-known scientist and lawyer, worked on the code for four years. [passage omitted]

The bill on the operation of commercial banks in Georgia is also very important. It will be another step on the road to entrepreneurship and economic liberalization. It will help the formation of credit and finance reserves and increase the people's confidence in banks. Adoption of this bill will mark the end of a transitional period in banking reform, and Georgia's two-tier banking system will start functioning on a legal basis.

The bill on the ownership of arable land had great reverberations in society. The bill, which was the subject of debate by parliamentary and government circles and experts for one-and-a-half years, was recently published in the press, and a nationwide debate on the bill is under way. The president has not yet presented the bill to parliament. The question of land will determine the fate of the country and the Georgian nation. There is immense responsibility not only to our generation but also to future generations. Adoption of this law will be crucial for the implementation of reforms in the country. It will also decide whether the market economy really takes hold in the country and whether foreign capital will start to flow in. All of this will not take place without a legal definition of land ownership.

The introduction of private ownership of land is crucial for more than a million families. As I said in the past, up to 950,000 families in the countryside have plots of land and up to 350,000 families in urban areas also have vegetable plots, and so on. The people will be convinced that no one will confiscate their plots of land again and that the investment of capital is required for efficient use of land. Peasants and other owners of land will then look after their land. Land is in a terrible state today.

At the same time, because of current realities in Georgia, adoption of the land law turned into a political problem. A section of society, including members of the creative intelligentsia, fears that the introduction of land ownership will encroach on national interests. Their fears are natural and understandable. The issue of land is a vital question for a Georgian man. To decide it, all opinions should be examined and taken into account. We will then see if there is any reason for concern.

The bill provides for a whole system of restrictions during the denationalization of land. They include inheritors' preferential status during the purchase of land, rules preventing the fragmentation of plots and encouraging their expansion, special permission for denationalization and other provisions which should rule out undesirable trends. Rather than reject the bill categorically, as some figures have done in the press, it is better to study the proposed mechanism in detail. On the instructions of the president, a special team made up of lawyers, agricultural and other experts has been working on this. Together with members of the relevant parliamentary committees, they will weigh up all the pros and cons. I think that on the basis of such a nationwide, open, public debate and taking into account opinion polls, we will agree on the main principles of the law and the decision will be taken to submit its final draft to parliament. [passage omitted]

As you said, last week abounded in important meetings at an international level. The results of the visit by an IMF mission are especially important. At a meeting with the president, satisfaction was expressed in connection with the progress of reforms in the country. It was said that talks with creditors on the allocation of an ESAF [Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility] loan are proceeding well. The mission spoke highly of the adoption of the budget by parliament. In their opinion, it is — I do not know if it is true, but this is what they said — one of the best budgets adopted in postcommunist countries. I don't think they judged it on the size of the deficit but on the incentive the budget gives to reforms. I think that they saw our budget from that angle and that is why its progressive nature was noted.

You have already listed the names of large international companies whose representatives visited us last week. Our relations have a great future if we continue on the path of reforms.

Among these visits, I would single out the visit by experts from the Republic of Uzbekistan, who came here on their president's instructions. You will remember that in Tashkent, [Islam] Karimov and I had a detailed examination of the prospects for the so-called Eurasian corridor. The Uzbek visitors saw our transportation routes and the port of Poti. They also showed an interest in Batumi, although they did not have time to go there. In their opinion, all the conditions are in place in Georgia for the transit of Uzbek cotton, fertilizers, and agricultural machinery through Georgian territory to Europe and America and for the transit to Uzbekistan of grain, sugar, tea, and other imports from the West. Other Central Asian countries have similar interests. [passage omitted]

[Oniani] Abkhazia remained the center of attention last week. [Andrey] Nikolayev, commander of the Russian Border Troops, visited Georgia in this connection. [Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy] Primakov and [Abkhaz leader Vladislav] Ardzinba held meetings. In his letter, Turkish President Demirel talked about a just settlement of the Abkhaz problem and said that the future of Abkhazia should be decided within a single Georgia. Ardzinba spoke about a federal union and his opposition to the withdrawal of Russian peacekeeping forces from Abkhazia, while [Russian Defense Minister Pavel] Grachev, who made two interesting statements, disagreed with him. However, the most important thing is that after an eight-month break, Georgians and Abkhazians again met at the negotiating table. The CIS Interparliamentary Assembly held a very important debate on Abkhazia, which was attended by [Zurab Zhvaniya,] the chairman of the Georgian parliament.

[Shevardnadze] Since the 19 January decisions [imposing CIS sanctions against Abkhazia] were made, Russia stepped up its mediation. I would say that it is even more than mediation, because a lot of resolve can be felt as well as a desire to carry through the issue to completion. The latest stage of talks is linked to personal instructions and orders from President Yeltsin.

I would like to express satisfaction with Yevgeniy Primakov's active involvement in the peace process. In new conditions, Boris Pastukhov, who is now his first deputy, is also taking a new approach. I attach special importance to the unequivocal and resolute statements by Pavel Grachev which you mentioned. The CIS Interparliamentary Assembly also spoke. Following certain misunderstandings in the Russian Duma, the Assembly's statement issued in St. Petersburg acquired a new meaning and weight. I would like to express my sincere pleasure with the successful performance, resolute position, and strong determination to achieve its objective by our delegation led by Zurab Zhvaniya.

General Nikolayev's visit to Tbilisi was fruitful. The central issue discussed during the visit was the progress of the implementation of the 19 January decisions.

I also highly appreciate the support for Georgian territorial integrity repeatedly expressed by Turkish President Suleyman Demirel which he reaffirmed in his latest letter to me.

As for Mr. Ardzinba's proposals, which he said were new, I would like to say that there is little new in them. But, although the essence of these proposals is unacceptable, an experienced eye will notice slight positive changes. However, I should add that it is very difficult to trust the Gudauta leader. We learned bitter lessons about it since 3 September 1992 [when Shevardnadze and Ardzinba signed the first Georgian-Abkhaz peace agreement].

I would like to remind the listeners again — I am ready to repeat it 10 times so that everyone can hear — what powers and status Abkhazia will have in a single Georgia. Abkhazia will be given essential attributes of statehood such as a constitution, parliament, anthem, emblem, flag, supreme court, extensive powers in the economic and cultural spheres, etc. The center will retain the powers needed for the existence of a single state. I think that it is quite possible to negotiate on this basis and to continue intensive talks. The main thing now is to start a painless return of refugees, which will naturally be followed by the mending of ties, the healing of wounds, and the warming of the climate.

Is there any other way? Yes there is, but it is full of blood and casualties. Before choosing that way, I would like to call on the Georgians and the Abkhazians, on the Abkhazians and the Georgians for reconciliation. It is in our common interests that justice should prevail. Let us use the wisdom of ancestors and restore the centuries-old traditions of brotherhood and friendship.

As regards the prospects for a meeting with Mr. Ardzinba — he expressed such an idea at his news conference in Moscow, saying that we should meet on neutral territory — you know that I have already met him on neutral territory, as well as on nonneutral territory when I went to Gudauta. Now I invite the Abkhaz leader to Tbilisi, or, if preferred, to Batumi, Zugdidi, Kutaisi, or any other place in Georgia.

As for the withdrawal of the peacekeeping troops mentioned by Mr. Grachev, I think he is right to question the wisdom of Russia spending billions and endangering the lives of thousands of its young people when there are no real results. Unless real progress is achieved at the talks and unless there is a real breakthrough on the return of refugees, the withdrawal of troops will turn into a harsh reality. As Mr. Yeltsin said during our meeting, this also applies to the peacekeeping forces stationed in Tskhinvali [in South Ossetia]. That is why our friends in Sukhumi, Tskhinvali, and elsewhere should hurry. We have no alternative but to complete the process of peace talks in time.

[Oniani] [passage omitted] Last week, Yeltsin agreed to run for president. The political situation in Russia is rather complex. [Gennadiy] Zyuganov is being named as Yeltsin's main contender. In this connection, procommunist forces in Georgia also stepped up their activity. For example, the [United] Communist Party, led by Panteleymon Giorgadze, held a news conference last week. Do you think that Russian-Georgian relations will change significantly if Zyuganov is elected Russian president?

[Shevardnadze] It is a rather delicate subject but since you asked this question, I will try to explain my position in a few words. The upcoming presidential elections will decide if there is a change of leadership in Russia. Yeltsin has a very good chance of victory. His victory will mean the continuation of reforms, stability in foreign policy, and continuity on the issue of approved priorities. These priorities include Russian foreign policy, which has recently become rather clear.

Answering a question from one of the Russian TV channels about two weeks ago on whether or not Yeltsin should take part in the presidential elections, I said that if I were him, I would run, considering the current situation in Russia. Whether or not Yeltsin is reelected mostly depends on Yeltsin himself, I mean, on how he conducts his election campaign. All the preconditions are in place for him to win. However, one cannot rule other possibilities, but I am not going to discuss other candidates.

As for the so-called other forces which have come to power in the Duma and the Federation Council, the meetings [of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly] in St. Petersburg showed that cooperation is possible and no one will be able to reverse the global changes that followed the end of the cold war. Forces trying to reverse the processes that have followed the end of the cold war will fail to come to power in any state.

As for the many statements by Panteleymon Giorgadze, I have always tried not to react to that. It does not not matter whether Panteleymon is a communist or anything else, he does not represent a force. Let the man talk as much as he wants if it makes him happy. [passage omitted]

Georgia: Nikolayev's Talks With Shevardnadze Reported

MK1602143496 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Temuri Kadzhaya: "Nikolayev and Shevardnadze Are Satisfied"]

[FBIS Translated Text] General of the Army Andrey Nikolayev, Russian Federation Federal Border Service director, has been a frequent visitor to Tbilisi of late, but the visit taking place on 13-14 February was his first working visit this year. Last year, Nikolayev came to Georgia on four occasions to discuss questions pertaining to the interests of both states. Nikolayev arrived in Tbilisi from Yerevan, and this visit was part of Nikolayev's tour of Transcaucasian states. On 13 February evening, Andrey Nikolayev had a meeting with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. This was a one-on-one meeting, following which Andrey Nikolayev and Eduard Shevardnadze gave an interview to reporters, assessing the results of the talks. Andrey Nikolayev stated the following: "The work we were to carry out in Georgia has been done successfully. We have outlined those positions which it was necessary to bring home to the leadership of Georgia in accordance with instructions from the president of Russia. I appreciate the fact that the president of Georgia shares all these positions; more than that, the president of Georgia thinks it necessary to attune some of the positions to the decisions made on 19 January 1996 by the CIS Heads of State Council and from the point of view of our understandings on jointly guarding the border."

The Russian Federation Federal Border Service director also stressed that there are problems "which worry Georgia and its leader; there are problems which also worry the leadership of Russia." Nikolayev thinks that mutually acceptable decisions should be made with regard to these problems, which would benefit both Russia and Georgia. In his words, some practical questions were solved during the meeting with Shevardnadze, namely, the questions of manning, performance of duties, funding of border units, material support, and so on. General of the Army Nikolayev also stressed that the Georgian side thinks it necessary to have its own observers on the Psou River (the Abkhaz section of the Russian-Georgian border), who would, according to an understanding reached earlier, keep tabs on and take part in the implementation of the decisions made on 19 January by the CIS Heads of State Council. Nikolayev said that Russia had agreed with this proposal of the Georgian side.

Eduard Shevardnadze assessed the results of the talks with the Russian Federation Federal Border Service director by saying that the joint guarding of the border calls for serious attention on the part of the top leaders of the two states. Shevardnadze pointed out that it is very important now to see to it that the decisions of the CIS Heads of State Council should be actually carried out inasmuch as this involves the interests of a third country — Turkey, whence cargoes arrive to Abkhazia (implying cargoes delivered to Sukhumi from Turkish seaports). Shevardnadze pointed out that he would be trying, in conditions of mutual understanding, to have the 19 January CIS Heads of State Council decisions carried out. He stressed that no ships from Turkey or any other country would be able to call at the Sukhumi port unless there is permission from the government of Georgia. Shevardnadze pointed out that the leadership of Georgia had informed the leadership of Turkey accordingly, and expressed the hope that there is an understanding of the situation on the part of Turkey.

Andrey Nikolayev also had a meeting with Zurab Zhvania, chairman of the Georgian parliament, attended by Vladimir Zemskiy, Russia's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Georgia; Major General Valeriy Chkheidze, head of Georgia's state border protection department and commander of border troops of Georgia; as well as representatives of various committees of the Georgian parliament. According to information of the parliament press center, which issued an official statement, the Georgian side stressed during this meeting that questions pertaining to military cooperation of the two countries including the questions of ratification of the agreement on the status of Russian border troops in Georgia, would be considered by the republic's parliament after the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia and after the Russian Federation State Duma ratifies the large-scale framework Georgian-Russian treaty on friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance. This treaty was signed in February 1994 during the visit of President Yeltsin of Russia to the capital of Georgia. The parliament of Georgia ratified this treaty this past January, with some Georgian political figures stressing that this was a unilateral good-will gesture in the hope that the Russian Federation State Duma would also ratify the treaty. But it seems at the moment that the State Duma of Russia has not come to grips with this question yet.

Georgia: Abkhazia President Ardzinba Interviewed

MK1702142396 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Feb 96 p 3

[Interview with Vladislav Grigoryevich Ardzinba, president of Abkhazia, by Mikhail Globachev: "They Pressure All, But In Different Ways"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt]

[Globachev] Vladislav Grigoryevich, what has changed in Abkhazia over recent months?

[Ardzinba] Unfortunately, the toughening of the blockade in line with the decision by CIS heads of state tells very much on the situation of the people who live in Abkhazia. This has increased their suffering. [passage omitted]

[Globachev] In what atmosphere did your recent consultations with Moscow politicians proceed? Did you sense any attempts to put a greater pressure on you?

[Ardzinba] We have been constantly pressured so far. I am forced to say that, had at least part of this pressure in whatever form been brought to bear on the other side, the result would have already been in evidence — we would have long agreed with Georgia. But since they are hoping there [in Georgia] to use Russia as a tool to "tie up our hands," and are waiting for this to happen, they therefore do not seek any compromise.

[Globachev] While in Moscow, you mostly met with Yevgeniy Primakov with whom you used to work in the same science institute and later in the USSR Supreme Soviet. Are there differences in the position of the previous and the new foreign ministers of Russia on the question of the Georgia-Abkhazia standoff? If there are, could you elaborate on them?

[Ardzinba] I can say that I am very pleased with my talks and consultations precisely with Primakov. In addition to being an experienced person in general and someone who knows this problem very well in particular, he is somebody with whom you can at least openly discuss everything, which is an extremely important thing. Earlier, I met with Foreign Minister Kozyrev, and I sense the difference very well. We are ready to cooperate in every way with Mr. Primakov, and we are grateful to him for the efforts to solve our problem. [passage omitted]

[Globachev] You have now promulgated a new compromise proposal: Abkhazia can unite with Georgia within the framework of a "federative union." When approximately can a new round of talks with the leadership of Georgia start?

[Ardzinba] The Georgian side has long been having our proposals. Honestly, I am convinced that they have no special objections to the text. They mainly have ambitions with regard to a difference between Abkhazia's autonomy as they see it and what we are proposing. I think that if they should know that it is necessary to agree to a compromise, it would be possible to go ahead and sign the protocol of the agreement that we are proposing.

[Globachev] For example, what could be done about this problem: Tamaz Nadareishvili, head of the Georgian deputation of Abkhazia's Supreme Soviet, advised to NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA that the Abkhazian leadership had decided to rename the health resort of Pitsunda as the city of Basayevsk.

[Ardzinba] Mr. Nadareishvili must be joking! Seriously speaking, to my great regret, I think that what he and his ilk are saying to so malign the Abkhaz side is an attempt to provoke a worsening of the situation so as to discredit us in the eyes of Russia's public. I wish they would at least simply stop hampering our normal development....

Estonia

Estonia: Oovel 'Concerned' at Calls for Revival of USSR

LD1702163096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1402 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TALLINN, Feb 17 (INTERFAX) — Estonia's Defense Minister Andrus Oovel is concerned about the statements of Russian presidential candidates, who call for reviving the Soviet Union.

That four out of six candidates made such calls worries him greatly, he told Interfax on Saturday. He cannot agree with those who say that statements by potential presidents "are meant only for domestic use," Oovel said.

This is one of the grounds for our attitude to Russia as a country of heightened danger, he pointed out. Nevertheless Oovel said that Estonia views no country as its enemy. According to him, the main danger stems from instability in the surrounding world.

Oovel believes that Estonia's wish to join NATO poses no threat to Russia. On the contrary, it is in Russia's interests to have a chain of stably democratic states along its western frontiers, he concluded.

Estonia: Defense Chief Views Current Issues; Concern Over Russia

LD1902192796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1759 GMT 19 Feb 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The presidential council for national defense is due to meet this week to discuss defense policy guidelines the Estonian government has approved before.

However, President Lennart Meri is yet to set the date for a council meeting.

At a news conference in Tallinn, Defense Chief Andrus Oovel said preventing any aggression was the main aimed of the country's defense policy.

He said the draft paper provides for putting up active and passive resistance to a would be aggressor with all available means if political methods fail to work.

In this connection, the minister spoke of great expectations being laid on the armed forces, the nation's will and international support.

He indicated Estonia's drive to integrate into NATO and the Western European Union to achieve just that.

The defense policy also provides for closer cooperation with the defense departments of the two other Baltic states, Latvia and Lithuania, including joint training of servicemen, the development of weapons systems, troop management, coordination and communications.

IF NOTE: The navies of the three states are expected to hold joint exercises, codenamed Amber Sea-96, in the Baltic Sea in July. Their aim is to check the readiness of war ships for involvement in peacekeeping operations including search and rescue work and helping disaster-stricken ships of third countries. The three countries are to send two warships each to take part in the exercises which will start in Latvia and end in Estonia. Amber Sea-96 also provides for three days of joint exercises with the Finnish navy.

Amber Sea exercises were first held last May.

The minister said the guidelines assign the main role to the country's land forces, with the Estonian navy expected to provide support in repulsing any aggression from the sea. He said the airforce would focus on tightening control over the country's air space.

The government plans to be able to mobilize up to 80,000 troops in the event of crisis.

It plans to set defense spending at 8-9 percent of the budget or 2 percent of GDP. This year's defense expenditure runs at over 500 million kronors (DM1 equals 8 kronors) or 5.2 percent of the budget.

Oovel said the underlying principle of the country's defense doctrine is "Estonia has no enemies", wit external instability posing the main threat to national security.

IF NOTE: Military advisors from other countries including retired NATO generals were involved in working out the country's defense doctrine which will serve as a basis for defense legislation after parliamentary approval.

In an interview with Interfax, the Estonian defense chief expressed concern following statements by Russia's presidential candidates of seeking to resuscitate the former Soviet Union. "I am very worried that four of the six candidates should make such proposals," he said.

The minister disagrees with arguments saying that "their statements of restoring the former Soviet Union or punishing Estonia are meant for domestic consumption alone." He said Russia must bring its own house in order first instead of looking for enemies without. The minister fears that millions of Russian voters taken in by such promises may one day demand these must be fulfilled. That is why, he said, we see Russia as a country posing a high security risk to us.

At the same time, Oovel reiterated that his country did not consider any other state as being an enemy. "We want to live in peace with our eastern neighbor and help it with the process of democratization. But we also want to remain independent and solve our problems ourselves," he said.

The minister does not believe Estonia's drive to become a NATO member poses any threat to Russia. "On the contrary, the creation of a chain of stable democracies along its western borders is in Russia's own interests," he said.

Estonia: CEPA Delegation Examines Human Rights Situation

WS2002105096 Tallinn BNS in English
1900 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Feb 19, BNS — A Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly [CEPA] delegation arrived in Estonia on Monday start an inspection of Estonia to see how Estonia has been meeting the obligations assumed on becoming Council of Europe member.

Head of the Estonian parliament's delegation to the Council of Europe, Kristiina Ojuland, told BNS after her meeting with the CEPA delegation that the Council of Europe was interested above all in the ratification by Estonia of the European convention of human rights.

"Estonia nas delayed ratification of the human rights convention for nearly three years and I hope the parliament will do it in March at the latest," Ojuland said.

CEPA representatives are also interested in the language tests taken by citizenship applicants and the situation in Estonian houses of detention, Ojuland said.

The CEPA delegation, which will stay in Estonia until Wednesday, is made up of CEPA legal affairs and human rights subcommittee chairman, Rudolf Bindig, Germany, legal affairs and human rights subcommittee member, Anders Bjorck, Sweden, and legal affairs and human rights subcommittee secretary, Tanja Kleinsborge, the parliament's press service informed BNS.

On the results of the visit the delegation will draw up a report to be discussed by the CEPA legal affairs and human rights subcommittee at the beginning of April, Ojuland said.

On Monday the CEPA delegation met with with justice minister Paul Varul, hancellor Eerik-Juhan Truuvali, head of the foreign ministry human rights bureau, Aino Lepik, and head of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, Henn Tasso.

On Tuesday the delegation will meet education minister Jaak Aaviksoo, the Estonian delegation to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, head of the State court, Rait Maruste, general director of the citizenship and migration board, Andres Kollist, general director of the language department, Ilmar Tomusk, and other officials.

On Wednesday the delegation will have discussions with the justice chancellors of the parliament's Russian faction, Sergey Isakov and Viktor Andreyev, head of the State court, Rait Maruste, authorized representative of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church, Henn Tosso, archbishop Cornelius of the Orthodox church, head of the language department, Ilmar Tomusk, and other officials.

The CEPA delegation will also visit the Tallinn central jail and give a press conference before their departure on Wednesday.

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